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THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS

8 ARLINGTON STREET, BOSTON (17)

ATLANTIC NARRATIVES

Modern Short Stories

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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SECOND SERIES

The Atlantic Monthly Press
BOSTON

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THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS
FOURTH PRINTING

Printed in the United States of America

1366

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INTRODUCTION

For those readers who have from early childhood been taught that the best things are the old things, it is oftentimes difficult to revert in imagination to the times when such classics as *Paradise Lost*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Robinson Crusoe*, new and unread, were just beginning to make their first tentative steps in the march toward the unknown and unseen goal of enduring fame. Yet the intrinsic literary worth of these classics was obviously just as firm in those far-off days of their initial appearance as in these present days of their acquired renown.

But in these present days, with the improved printing-presses moving at high speed and pouring forth everywhere their improvident and unsifted store, the best is too liable to be lost within the swift current of a vast and turbid abundance. It is, therefore, worth while for us — for those of us who have an abiding love of literature — to endeavor to rescue and place in more permanent form the choicest bits of this modern efflux of writing, and make it easily available for a more leisurely and intelligent perusal.

With this thought in mind, I have for several months been reading widely in the files of the *Atlantic Monthly*, with the idea of republishing the best of the recent stories in book form. A partial result of my labors is seen in *Atlantic Narratives* (First Series), published by the Atlantic Monthly Press in March of the current year. In selecting the twenty-three stories for that volume, I had the college student and the mature reader more definitely in mind. Some of these stories, accordingly, were perhaps a trifle too subtle and analytical for the younger student, though it is

interesting to note that the volume immediately found an interested audience, not only among college students and the reading public, but also within the classrooms of some of our best schools and academies.

Several of the more prominent English teachers, however, expressed a wish for a group of narratives simpler, more direct, and filled with incidents of a commoner and more elemental experience — such as would make an immediate appeal to a younger class of readers. I have accordingly made the selections for this second volume of *Atlantic Narratives* with this particular request in mind. At the same time that I have discarded the subtler and more analytical themes, I have held rigorously to the demand for genuine literary excellence and artistic technique. Discriminating critics will agree that for a writer to limit himself to the narrower confines of the simple and the commonplace and the elemental, may, in particular cases, demand even a finer grace and a higher technique.

The stories here gathered together, while possessing the attributes and range which the English teachers have suggested, are widely varying in appeal and in centres of interest. Miss Mary Antin's story, 'The Lie,' for example, reveals, in significant portrayal, a unique attitude of mind among the patriotic foreigners; Miss Elizabeth Ashe, Miss Kathleen Norris, and S. H. Kemper have, in their several manners, pleasantly revealed their appreciation of the humorous; Mrs. Comer and Miss Eastman and Mr. Meredith Nicholson have lent a note of idealism; Mr. Joseph Husband and Mr. E. Morlae have contributed true accounts of their personal experiences; and the remaining writers on the list have, in their various individual ways, found still other moods and themes appropriate to their individualities. The net result is a literary variety that merges appropriately, I trust, into a unit of genuine and abiding worth.

For helpful aid in the preparation of this volume, I am indebted to many English teachers, more particularly to Miss Anna Shaughnessy, of the English department in the Newton High School. Houghton Mifflin Company has generously granted me permission to use Mr. Husband's 'The Story of a Coal-Mine.' Mr. George B. Ives, expert critic and proof-reader, of the *Atlantic Monthly* staff, has read and revised the proofs. Most of all, however, I am indebted to Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, whose friendly counsel and literary acumen have been of constant service.

C. S. T.

Boston, Mass.
July, 1918

ATLANTIC NARRATIVES

THE LIE

BY MARY ANTIN

I

THE first thing about his American teachers that struck David Rudinsky was the fact that they were women, and the second was that they did not get angry if somebody asked questions. This phenomenon subverted his previous experience. When he went to *heder* (Hebrew school), in Russia, his teachers were always men, and they did not like to be interrupted with questions that were not in the lesson. Everything was different in America, and David liked the difference.

The American teachers, on their part, also made comparisons. They said David was not like other children. It was not merely that his mind worked like lightning; those neglected Russian waifs were almost always quick to learn, perhaps because they had to make up for lost time. The quality of his interest, more than the rapidity of his progress, excited comment. Miss Ralston, David's teacher in the sixth grade, which he reached in his second year at school, said of him that he never let go of a lesson till he had got the soul of the matter. 'I don't think grammar is grammar to him,' she said, 'or fractions mere arithmetic. I'm not satisfied with the way I teach these things since I've had David. I feel that if he were on the platform instead of me, geography and grammar would be spliced to the core of the universe.'

One difficulty David's teachers encountered, and that was his extreme reserve. In private conversation it was

hard to get anything out of him except 'yes, ma'am' and 'no, ma'am,' or, 'I don't understand, please.' In the classroom he did not seem to be aware of the existence of anybody besides Teacher and himself. He asked questions as fast as he could formulate them, and Teacher had to exercise much tact in order to satisfy him without slighting the rest of her pupils. To advances of a personal sort he did not respond, as if friendship were not among the things he hungered for.

It was Miss Ralston who found the way to David's heart. Perhaps she was interested in such things; they sometimes are, in the public schools. After the Christmas holidays, the children were given as a subject for composition, 'How I spent the Vacation.' David wrote in a froth of enthusiasm about whole days spent in the public library. He covered twelve pages with an account of the books he had read. The list included many juvenile classics in American history and biography; and from his comments it was plain that the little alien worshiped the heroes of war.

When Miss Ralston had read David's composition, she knew what to do. She was one of those persons who always know what to do, and do it. She asked David to stay after school, and read to him, from a blue book with gilt lettering, 'Paul Revere's Ride' and 'Independence Bell.' That hour neither of them ever forgot. To David it seemed as if all the heroes he had dreamed of crowded around him, so real did his teacher's reading make them. He heard the clash of swords and the flapping of banners in the wind. On the blackboard behind Miss Ralston troops of faces appeared and vanished, like the shadows that run across a hillside when clouds are moving in the sky. As for Miss Ralston, she said afterwards that she was the first person who had ever seen the real David Rudinsky. That was a curious statement to make, considering that his mother and

father, and sundry other persons in the two hemispheres, had had some acquaintance with David previous to the reading of 'Paul Revere's Ride.' However, Miss Ralston had a way of saying curious things.

There were many readings out of school hours, after that memorable beginning. Miss Ralston did not seem to realize that the School Board did not pay her for those extra hours that she spent on David. David did not know that she was paid at all. He thought Teacher was born on purpose to read and tell him things and answer his questions, just as his mother existed to cook his favorite soup and patch his trousers. So he brought his pet book from the library, and when the last pupil was gone, he took it from his desk and laid it on Miss Ralston's, without a word; and Miss Ralston read, and they were both happy. When a little Jewish boy from Russia goes to school in America, all sorts of things are likely to happen that the School Board does not provide for. It might be amusing to figure out the reasons.

David's reserve slowly melted in the glowing intimacy of these happy half-hours; still, he seldom made any comment on the reading at the time; he basked mutely in the warmth of his teacher's sympathy. But what he did not say orally he was very likely to say on paper. That also was one of Miss Ralston's discoveries. When she gave out the theme, 'What I Mean to Do When I Grow Up,' David wrote that he was going to be an American citizen, and always vote for honest candidates, and belong to a society for arresting illegal voters. You see David was only a greenhorn, and an excitable one. He thought it a very great matter to be a citizen, perhaps because such a thing was not allowed in the country he came from. Miss Ralston probably knew how it was with him, or she guessed. She was great at guessing, as all her children knew. At any rate, she did not smile as

she read of David's patriotic ambitions. She put his paper aside until their next quiet hour, and then she used it so as to get a great deal out of him that he would not have had the courage to tell if he had not believed that it was an exercise in composition.

This Miss Ralston was a crafty person. She learned from David about a Jewish restaurant where his father sometimes took him; a place where a group of ardent young Russians discussed politics over their inexpensive dinner. She heard about a mass meeting of Russian Jews to celebrate the death of Alexander III, 'because he was a cruel tyrant, and was very bad to Jewish people.' She even tracked some astonishing phrases in David's vocabulary to their origin in the Sunday orations he had heard on the Common, in his father's company.

Impressed by these and other signs of paternal interest in her pupil's education, Miss Ralston was not unprepared for the visit which David's father paid her soon after these revelations. It was a very cold day, and Mr. Rudinsky shivered in his thin, shabby overcoat; but his face glowed with inner warmth as he discovered David's undersized figure in one of the front seats.

'I don't know how to say it what I feel to see my boy sitting and learning like this,' he said, with a vibration in his voice that told more than his words. 'Do you know, ma'am, if I didn't have to make a living, I'd like to stay here all day and see my David get educated. I'm forty years old, and I've had much in my life, but it's worth nothing so much as this. The day I brought my children to school, it was the best day in my life. Perhaps you won't believe me, ma'am, but when I hear that David is a good boy and learns good in school, I would n't change places with Vanderbilt the millionaire.'

He looked at Miss Ralston with the eyes of David listening to 'Paul Revere's Ride.'

'What do you think, ma'am,' he asked, as he got up to leave, 'my David will be a good American, no?'

'He ought to be,' said Miss Ralston, warmly, 'with such a father.'

Mr. Rudinsky did not try to hide his gratification.

'I am a citizen,' he said, unconsciously straightening. 'I took out citizen papers as soon as I came to America, four years ago.'

So they came to the middle of February, when preparations for Washington's Birthday were well along. One day the class was singing 'America,' when Miss Ralston noticed that David stopped and stared absently at the blackboard in front of him. He did not wake out of his reverie till the singing was over, and then he raised his hand.

'Teacher,' he asked, when he had permission to speak, 'what does it mean, "Land where my fathers died"?'

Miss Ralston explained, wondering how many of her pupils cared to analyze the familiar words as David did.

A few days later, the national hymn was sung again. Miss Ralston watched David. His lips formed the words 'Land where my fathers died,' and then they stopped, set in the pout of childish trouble. His eyes fixed themselves on the teacher's, but her smile of encouragement failed to dispel his evident perplexity.

Anxious to help him over his unaccountable difficulty, Miss Ralston detained him after school.

'David,' she asked him, when they were alone, 'do you understand "America" now?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'Do you understand "Land where my fathers died"?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'You did n't sing with the others.'

'No, ma'am.'

Miss Ralston thought of a question that would rouse him.

'Don't you like "America," David?'

The boy almost jumped in his place.

'Oh, yes, ma'am, I do! I like "America." It's —fine.'

He pressed his fist nervously to his mouth, a trick he had when excited.

'Tell me, David, why you don't sing it.'

David's eyes fixed themselves in a look of hopeless longing. He answered in a whisper, his pale face slowly reddening.

'*My* fathers did n't die here. How can I sing such a lie?'

Miss Ralston's impulse was to hug the child, but she was afraid of startling him. The attention she had lavished on the boy was rewarded at this moment, when her understanding of his nature inspired the answer to his troubled question. She saw how his mind worked. She realized, what a less sympathetic witness might have failed to realize, that behind the moral scruple expressed in his words, there was a sense of irreparable loss derived from the knowledge that he had no share in the national past. The other children could shout the American hymn in all the pride of proprietorship, but to him the words did not apply. It was a flaw in his citizenship, which he was so jealous to establish.

The teacher's words were the very essence of tact and sympathy. In her voice were mingled the yearning of a mother and the faith of a comrade.

'David Rudinsky, you have as much a right to those words as I or anybody else in America. Your ancestors did not die on our battlefields, but they would have if they'd had a chance. You used to spend all your time reading the Hebrew books, in Russia. Don't you know how your people — your ancestors, perhaps! — fought the Roman tyrants? Don't you remember the Maccabean brothers,

and Bar Kochba, and — oh, you know about them more than I! I'm ashamed to tell you that I have n't read much Jewish history, but I'm sure if we begin to look it up, we'll find that people of your race — people like your father, David — took part in the fight for freedom, wherever they were allowed. And even in this country — David, I'm going to find out for you how many Jews there were in the armies of the Revolution. We don't think about it here, you see, because we don't ask what a man's religion is, as long as he is brave and good.'

David's eyes slowly lost their look of distress as his teacher talked. His tense little face, upturned to hers, reminded her of a withered blossom that revives in the rain. She went on with increasing earnestness, herself interested in the discoveries she was making, in her need.

'I tell you the truth, David, I never thought of these things before, but I do believe that the Pilgrim Fathers did n't all come here before the Revolution. Is n't your father just like them? Think of it, dear, how he left his home, and came to a strange land, where he could n't even speak the language. That was a great trouble, you know; something like the fear of the Indians in the old days. And was n't he looking for the very same things? He wanted freedom for himself and his family, and a chance for his children to grow up wise and brave. You know your father cares more for such things than he does for money or anything. It's the same story over again. Every ship that brings your people from Russia and other countries where they are ill-treated is a Mayflower. If I were a Jewish child like you, I would sing "America" louder than anybody else!'

David's adoring eyes gave her the thanks which his tongue would not venture to utter. Never since that moment, soon after his arrival from Russia, when his father showed him his citizenship papers, saying, 'Look, my son,

this makes you an American,' had he felt so secure in his place in the world.

Miss Ralston studied his face in silence while she gathered up some papers on her desk, preparatory to leaving. In the back of her mind she asked herself to how many of the native children in her class the Fourth of July meant anything besides fire-crackers.

'Get your things, David,' she said presently, as she locked her desk. 'It's time we were going. Think if we should get locked up in the building!'

David smiled absently. In his ears ran the familiar line, 'Land where my fathers died — my fathers died — fathers died.'

'It's something like the Psalms!' he said suddenly, himself surprised at the discovery.

'What is like the Psalms, dear?'

He hesitated. Now that he had to explain, he was not sure any more. Miss Ralston helped him out.

'You mean "America," sounds like the Psalms to you?'

David nodded. His teacher beamed her understanding. How did she guess wherein the similarity lay? David had in mind such moments as this when he said of Miss Ralston, 'Teacher talks with her eyes.'

Miss Ralston went to get her coat and hat from the closet.

'Get your things, David,' she repeated. 'The janitor will come to chase us out in a minute.'

He was struggling with the torn lining of a coat-sleeve in the children's dressing-room, when he heard Miss Ralston exclaim,—

'Oh, David! I had almost forgotten. You must try this on. This is what you're going to wear when you speak the dialogue with Annie and Raymond. We used it in a play a few years ago. I thought it would do for you.'

She held up a blue-and-buff jacket with tarnished epau-

lets. David hurried to put it on. He was to take the part of George Washington in the dialogue. At sight of the costume, his heart started off on a gallop.

Alas for his gallant aspirations! Nothing of David was visible outside the jacket except two big eyes above and two blunt boot-toes below. The collar reached to his ears; the cuffs dangled below his knees. He resembled a scarecrow in the cornfield more than the Father of his Country.

Miss Ralston suppressed her desire to laugh.

'It's a little big, is n't it?' she said cheerily, holding up the shoulders of the heroic garment. 'I wonder how we can make it fit. Don't you think your mother would know how to take up the sleeves and do something to the back?'

She turned the boy around, more hopeless than she would let him see. Miss Ralston understood more about little boys' hearts than about their coats.

'How old are you, David?' she asked, absently, wondering for the hundredth time at his diminutive stature. 'I thought the boy for whom this was made was about your age.'

David's face showed that he felt reproved. 'I'm twelve,' he said, apologetically.

Miss Ralston reproached herself for her tactlessness, and proceeded to make amends.

'Twelve?' she repeated, patting the blue shoulders. 'You speak the lines like a much older boy. I'm sure your mother can make the coat fit, and I'll bring the wig — a powdered wig — and the sword, David! You'll look just like George Washington!'

Her gay voice echoed in the empty room. Her friendly eyes challenged his. She expected to see him kindle, as he did so readily in these days of patriotic excitement. But David failed to respond. He remained motionless in his place, his eyes blank and staring. Miss Ralston had the

feeling that behind his dead front his soul was running away from her.

This is just what was happening. David was running away from her, and from himself, and from the image of George Washington, conjured up by the scene with the military coat. Somewhere in the jungle of his consciousness a monster was stirring, and his soul fled in terror of its clutch. What was it — what was it that came tearing through the wilderness of his memories of two worlds? In vain he tried not to understand. The ghosts of forgotten impressions cackled in the wake of the pursuing monster, the breath of whose nostrils spread an odor of evil sophistries grafted on his boyish thoughts in a chimerical past.

His mind reeled in a whirlwind of recollection. Miss Ralston could not have understood some of the things David reviewed, even if he had tried to tell her. In that other life of his, in Russia, had been monstrous things, things that seemed unbelievable to David himself, after his short experience of America. He had suffered many wrongs, — yes, even as a little boy, — but he was not thinking of past grievances as he stood before Miss Ralston, seeing her as one sees a light through a fog. He was thinking of things harder to forget than injuries received from others. It was a sudden sense of his own sins that frightened David, and of one sin in particular, the origin of which was buried somewhere in the slime of the evil past. David was caught in the meshes of a complex inheritance; contradictory impulses tore at his heart. Fearfully he dived to the bottom of his consciousness, and brought up a bitter conviction: David Rudinsky, who called himself an American, who worshiped the names of the heroes, suddenly knew that he had sinned, sinned against his best friend, sinned even as he was planning to impersonate George Washington, the pattern of honor.

His white forehead glistened with the sweat of anguish. His eyes sickened. Miss Ralston caught him as he wavered and put him in the nearest seat.

'Why, David! what's the matter? Are you ill? Let me take this off — it's so heavy. There, that's better. Just rest your head on me, so.'

This roused him. He wriggled away from her support, and put out a hand to keep her off.

'Why, David! what *is* the matter? Your hands are so cold — '

David's head felt heavy and wobbly, but he stood up and began to put on his coat again, which he had pulled off in order to try on the uniform. To Miss Ralston's anxious questions he answered not a syllable, neither did he look at her once. His teacher, thoroughly alarmed, hurriedly put on her street things, intending to take him home. They walked in silence through the empty corridors, down the stairs, and across the school yard. The teacher noticed with relief that the boy grew steadier with every step. She smiled at him encouragingly when he opened the gate for her, as she had taught him, but he did not meet her look.

At the corner where they usually parted David paused, steeling himself to take his teacher's hand; but to his surprise she kept right on, taking *his* crossing.

It was now that he spoke, and Miss Ralston was astonished at the alarm in his voice.

'Miss Ralston, where are you going? You don't go this way.'

'I'm going to see you home, David,' she replied firmly. 'I can't let you go alone — like this.'

'Oh, teacher, don't, please don't! I'm all right — I'm not sick, — it's not far — Don't, Miss Ralston, *please!*'

In the February dusk, Miss Ralston saw the tears rise to his eyes. Whatever was wrong with him, it was plain that

her presence only made him suffer the more. Accordingly she yielded to his entreaty.

'I hope you'll be all right, David,' she said, in a tone she might have used to a full-grown man. 'Good-bye.' And she turned the corner.

II

All the way home Miss Ralston debated the wisdom of allowing him to go alone, but as she recalled his look and his entreating voice, she felt anew the compulsion that had made her yield. She attributed his sudden breakdown entirely to overwrought nerves, and remorsefully resolved not to subject him in the future to the strain of extra hours after school.

Her misgivings were revived the next morning, when David failed to appear with the ringing of the first gong, as was his habit. But before the children had taken their seats, David's younger brother, Bennie, brought her news of the missing boy.

'David's sick in bed,' he announced in accents of extreme importance. 'He did n't come home till awful late last night, and he was so frozen, his teeth knocked together. My mother says he burned like a fire all night, and she had to take little Harry in her bed, with her and papa, so 's David could sleep all alone. We all went downstairs in our bare feet this morning, and dressed ourselves in the kitchen, so David could sleep.'

'What is the matter with him? Did you have the doctor?'

'No, ma'am, not yet. The dispensary don't open till nine o'clock.'

Miss Ralston begged him to report again in the afternoon, which he did, standing before her, cap in hand, his sense of importance still dominating over brotherly concern.

'He's sick, all right,' Bennie reported. 'He don't eat at all — just drinks and drinks. My mother says he cried the whole morning, when he woke up and found out he'd missed school. My mother says he tried to get up and dress himself, but he could n't anyhow. Too sick.'

'Did you have the doctor?' interrupted Miss Ralston, suppressing her impatience.

'No, ma'am, not yet. My father went to the dispensary but the doctor said he can't come till noon, but he did n't. Then I went to the dispensary, dinner time, but the doctor did n't yet come when we went back to school. My mother says you can die ten times before the dispensary doctor comes.'

'What does your mother think it is?'

'Oh, she says it's a bad cold; but David is n't strong, you know, so she's scared. I guess if he gets worse I'll have to stay home from school to run for the medicines.'

'I hope not Bennie. Now you'd better run along, or you'll be late.'

'Yes, ma'am. Good-bye.'

'Will you come again in the morning and tell me about your brother?'

'Yes, ma'am. Good-bye. — Teacher.'

'Yes, Bennie?'

'Do you think you can do something — something — about his *record?* David feels dreadful because he's broke his record. He never missed school before, you know. It's — it's too bad to see him cry. He's always so quiet, you know, kind of like grown people. He don't fight or tease or anything. Do you think you can, teacher?'

Miss Ralston was touched by this tribute to her pupil, but she could not promise to mend the broken record.

'Tell David not to worry. He has the best record in the school, for attendance and everything. Tell him I said he

must hurry and get well, as we must rehearse our pieces for Washington's Birthday.'

The next morning Bennie reeled off a longer story than ever. He described the doctor's visit in great detail, and Miss Ralston was relieved to gather that David's ailment was nothing worse than grippe; unless, as the doctor warned, his run-down condition caused complications. He would be in bed a week or more, in any case, 'and he ought to sleep most of the time, the doctor said.'

'I guess the doctor don't know our David!' Bennie scoffed. 'He never wants at all to go to sleep. He reads and reads when everybody goes to bed. One time he was reading all night, and the lamp went out, and he was afraid to go downstairs for oil, because he'd wake somebody, so he lighted matches and read little bits. There was a heap of burned matches in the morning.'

'Dear me!' exclaimed Miss Ralston. 'He ought not to do that. Your father ought not — Does your father allow him to stay up nights?'

'Sure. My father's proud because he's going to be a great man; a doctor, maybe.' He shrugged his shoulders, as if to say, 'What may not a David become?'

'David is funny, don't you think, teacher?' the boy went on. 'He asks such funny questions. What do you think he said to the doctor?'

'I can't imagine.'

'Well, he pulled him by the sleeve when he took out the — the thing he puts in your mouth, and said kind of hoarse, "Doctor, did you ever tell a lie?" Was n't that funny?'

Miss Ralston did not answer. She was thinking that David must have been turning over some problem in his mind, to say so much to a stranger.

'Did you give him my message?' she asked finally.

'Yes'm! I told him about rehearsing his piece for Washington's Birthday.' Bennie paused.

'Well?'

'He acted so funny. He turned over to the wall, and cried and cried without any noise.'

'The poor boy! He'll be dreadfully disappointed not to take his part in the exercises.'

Bennie shook his head.

'That is n't for what he cries,' he said oracularly.

Miss Ralston's attentive silence invited further revelations.

'He's *worrying* about something,' Bennie brought out, rolling his head ominously.

'Why? How do you know?'

'The doctor said so. He told my father downstairs. He said, "Make him tell, if you can, it may help to pull him off" — no, "pull him up." That's what the doctor said.'

Miss Ralston's thoughts flew back to her last interview with David, two days before, when he had broken down so suddenly. Was there a mystery there? She was certain the boy was overwrought, and physically run down. Apparently, also, he had been exposed to the weather during the evening when he was taken ill; Bennie's chatter indicated that David had wandered in the streets for hours. These things would account for the grippe, and for the abnormal fever of which Bennie boasted. But what was David worrying about? She resolved to go and see the boy in a day or two, when he was reported to be more comfortable.

On his next visit Bennie brought a message from the patient himself.

'He said to give you this, teacher,' handing Miss Ralston a journal. 'It's yours. It has the pieces in it for Wash-

ington's Birthday. He said you might need it, and the doctor did n't say when he could go again to school.'

Miss Ralston laid the journal carelessly on a pile of other papers. Bennie balanced himself on one foot, looking as if his mission were not yet ended.

'Well, Bennie?' Miss Ralston encouraged him. She was beginning to understand his mysterious airs.

'David was awful careful about that book,' the messenger said impressively. 'He said over and over not to lose it, and not to give it to nobody only you.'

III

It was not till the end of the day that Miss Ralston took up the journal Bennie had brought. She turned the leaves absently, thinking of David. He would be so disappointed to miss the exercises! And to whom should she give the part of George Washington in the dialogue? She found the piece in the journal. A scrap of paper marked the place. A folded paper. Folded several times. Miss Ralston opened out the paper and found some writing.

'Dear Teacher Miss Ralston,—

'I can't be George Washington any more because I have lied to you. I must not tell you about what, because you would blame somebody who did n't do wrong.

'Your friend,

'David Rudinsky.'

Again and again Miss Ralston read the note, unable to understand it. David, her David, whose soul was a mirror for every noble idea, had lied to her! What could he mean? What had impelled him? *Somebody who did n't do wrong.* So it was not David alone; there was some complication with another person. She studied the note word for word,

and her eyes slowly filled with tears. If the boy had really lied — if the whole thing were not a chimera of his fevered nights — then what must he have suffered of remorse and shame! Her heart went out to him even while her brain was busy with the mystery.

She made a swift resolution. She would go to David at once. She was sure he would tell her more than he had written, and it would relieve his mind. She did not dread the possible disclosures. Her knowledge of the boy made her certain that she would find nothing ignoble at the bottom of his mystery. He was only a child, after all — an overwrought, sensitive child. No doubt he exaggerated his sin, if sin there were. It was her duty to go and put him at rest.

She knew that David's father kept a candy shop in the basement of his tenement, and she had no trouble in finding the place. Half the children in the neighborhood escorted her to the door, attracted by the phenomenon of a teacher loose on their streets.

The tinkle of the shop-bell brought Mr. Rudinsky from the little kitchen in the rear.

'Well, well!' he exclaimed, shaking hands heartily. 'This is a great honor — a great honor.' He sounded the initial *h*. 'I wish I had a palace for you to come in, ma'am. I don't think there was such company in this house since it was built.'

His tone was one of genuine gratification. Ushering her into the kitchen, he set a chair for her, and himself sat down at a respectful distance.

'I'm sorry,' he began, with a wave of his hand around the room. 'Such company ought not to sit in the kitchen, but you see —'

He was interrupted by Bennie, who had clattered in at the visitor's heels, panting for recognition.

'Never mind, teacher,' the youngster spoke up, 'we got a parlor upstairs, with a mantelpiece and everything, but David sleeps up there — the doctor said it's the most air — and you dass n't wake him up till he wakes himself.'

Bennie's father frowned, but the visitor smiled a cordial smile.

'I like a friendly kitchen like this,' she said quietly. 'My mother did not keep any help when I was a little girl and I was a great deal in the kitchen.'

Her host showed his appreciation of her tact by dropping the subject.

'I'm sure you came about David,' he said.

'I did. How is he?'

'Pretty sick, ma'am. The doctor says it's not the sickness so much, but David is so weak and small. He says David studies too much altogether. Maybe he's right. What do you think, ma'am?'

Miss Ralston answered remorsefully.

'I agree with the doctor. I think we are all to blame. We push him too much when we ought to hold him back.'

Here Bennie made another raid on the conversation.

'He's going to be a great man, a doctor maybe. My mother says —'

Mr. Rudinsky did not let him finish. He thought it time to insure the peace of so important an interview.

'Bennie,' said he, 'you will go mind the store, and keep the kitchen door shut.'

Bennie's discomfiture was evident in his face. He obeyed, but not without a murmur.

'Let us make a covenant to take better care of David in the future.'

Miss Ralston was speaking when Mrs. Rudinsky appeared in the doorway. She was flushed from the exertions of a hasty toilet, for which she had fled upstairs at the

approach of 'company.' She came forward timidly, holding out a hand on which the scrubbing brush and the paring knife had left their respective marks.

'How do you do, ma'am?' she said, cordially, but shyly. 'I'm glad to see you. I wish I can speak English better, I'd like to say how proud I am to see David's teacher in my house.'

'Why, you speak wonderfully!' Miss Ralston exclaimed, with genuine enthusiasm. 'I don't understand how you pick up the language in such a short time. I could n't learn Russian so fast, I'm sure.'

'My husband makes us speak English all the time,' Mrs. Rudinsky replied. 'From the fust day he said to speak English. He scolds the children if he hears they speak Jewish.'

'Sure,' put in her husband, 'I don't want my family to be greenhorns.'

Miss Ralston turned a glowing face to him.

'Mr. Rudinsky, I think you've done wonders for your family. If all immigrants were like you, we would n't need any restriction laws.' She threw all possible emphasis into her cordial voice. 'Why, you're a better American than some natives I know!'

Mrs. Rudinsky sent her husband a look of loving pride.

'He wants to be a Yankee,' she said.

Her husband took up the cue in earnest.

'Yes, ma'am,' he said, 'that's my ambition. When I was a young man, in the old country, I wanted to be a scholar. But a Jew has no chance in the old country; perhaps you know how it is. It was n't the Hebrew books I wanted. I wanted to learn what the rest of the world learned, but a poor Jew had no chance in Russia. When I got to America, it was too late for me to go to school. It took me all my time and strength to make a living — I've never

been much good in business, ma'am — and when I got my family over, I saw that it was the children would go to school for me. I'm glad to be a plain citizen, if my children will be educated Americans.'

People with eyes and hands like Mr. Rudinsky's can say a great deal in a few words. Miss Ralston felt as if she had known him all his life, and followed his strivings in two worlds.

'I'm glad to know you, Mr. Rudinsky,' she said in a low voice. 'I wish more of my pupils had fathers like David's.'

Her host changed the subject very neatly.

'And I wish the school children had more teachers like you. David likes you so much.'

'Oh, he liked you!' the wife confirmed. 'Please stay till he veks up. He'll be sorry to missed your vis*it*.'

While his wife moved quietly around the stove, making tea, Mr. Rudinsky entertained their guest with anecdotes of David's Hebrew-school days, and of his vain efforts to get at secular books.

'He was just like me,' he said. 'He wanted to learn everything. I could n't afford a private teacher, and they would n't take him in the public school. He learned Russian all alone, and if he got a book from somewhere — a history or anything — he would n't eat or drink till he read it all.'

Mrs. Rudinsky often glanced at David's teacher, to see how her husband's stories were impressing her. She was too shy with her English to say more than was required of her as hostess, but her face, aglow with motherly pride, showed how she participated in her husband's enthusiasm.

'You see yourself, ma'am, what he is,' said David's father, 'but what could I make of him in Russia? I was happy when he got here, only it was a little late. I wished he started in school younger.'

'He has time enough,' said Miss Ralston. 'He'll get through grammar school before he's fourteen. He's twelve now, is n't he?'

'Yes, ma'am — no, ma'am! He's really fourteen now, but I made him out younger on purpose.'

Miss Ralston looked puzzled. Mr. Rudinsky explained.

'You see, ma'am, he was twelve years when he came, and I wanted he should go to school as long as possible, so when I made his school certificate, I said he was only ten. I have seven children, and David is the oldest one, and I was afraid he'd have to go to work, if business was bad, or if I was sick. The state is a good father to the children in America, if the real fathers don't mix in. Why should my David lose his chance to get educated and be somebody, because I am a poor business man, and have too many children? So I made out that he had to go to school two years more.'

He narrated this anecdote in the same simple manner in which he had told a dozen others. He seemed pleased to rehearse the little plot whereby he had insured his boy's education. As Miss Ralston did not make any comment immediately, he went on, as if sure of her sympathy.

'I told you I got my citizen papers right away when I came to America. I worked hard before I could bring my family — it took me four years to save the money — and they found a very poor home when they got here, but they were citizens right away. But it would n't do them much good, if they did n't get educated. I found out all about the compulsory education, and I said to myself that's the policeman that will keep me from robbing my David if I fail in business.'

He did not overestimate his visitor's sympathy. Miss Ralston followed his story with quick appreciation of his ideals and motives, but in her ingenuous American mind

one fact separated itself from the others: namely, that Mr. Rudinsky had falsified his boy's age, and had recorded the falsehood in a public document. Her recognition of the fact carried with it no criticism. She realized that Mr. Rudinsky's conscience was the product of an environment vastly different from hers. It was merely that to her mind the element of deceit was something to be accounted for, be it ever so charitably, whereas in Mr. Rudinsky's mind it evidently had no existence at all.

'So David is really fourteen years old?' she repeated incredulously. 'Why, he seems too little even for twelve! Does he know? — Of course he would know! I wonder that he consented —'

She broke off, struck by a sudden thought. 'Consented to tell a lie' she had meant to say, but the unspoken words diverted her mind from the conversation. It came upon her in a flash that she had found the key to David's mystery. His note was in her pocketbook, but she knew every word of it, and now everything was plain to her. The lie was this lie about his age, and the person he wanted to shield was his father. And for that he was suffering so!

She began to ask questions eagerly.

'Has David said anything about — about a little trouble he had in school the day he became ill?'

Both parents showed concern.

'Trouble? what trouble?'

'Oh, it was hardly trouble — at least, I could n't tell myself.'

'David is so hard to understand sometimes,' his father said.

'Oh, I don't think so!' the teacher cried. 'Not when you make friends with him. He does n't say much, it's true, but his heart is like a crystal.'

'He's too still,' the mother insisted, shaking her head.

'All the time he's sick, he don't say anything, only when we ask him something. The doctor thinks he's worrying about something, but he don't tell.'

The mother sighed, but Miss Ralston cut short her reflections.

'Mrs. Rudinsky — Mr. Rudinsky,' she began eagerly, '*I* can tell you what David's troubled about.'

And she told them the story of her last talk with David, and finally read them his note.

'And this lie,' she ended, 'you know what it is, don't you? You've just told me yourself, Mr. Rudinsky.'

She looked pleadingly at him, longing to have him understand David's mind as she understood it. But Mr. Rudinsky was very slow to grasp the point.

'You mean — about the certificate? Because I made out that he was younger?'

Miss Ralston nodded.

'You know David has such a sense of honor,' she explained, speaking slowly, embarrassed by the effort of following Mr. Rudinsky's train of thought and her own at the same time. 'You know how he questions everything — sooner or later he makes everything clear to himself — and something must have started him thinking of this old matter lately — Why, of course! I remember I asked him his age that day, when he tried on the costume, and he answered as usual, and then, I suppose, he suddenly *realized* what he was saying. I don't believe he ever *thought* about it since — since you arranged it so, and now, all of a sudden — '

She did not finish, because she saw that her listeners did not follow her. Both their faces expressed pain and perplexity. After a long silence, David's father spoke.

'And what do *you* think, ma'am?'

Miss Ralston was touched by the undertone of submis-

sion in his voice. Her swift sympathy had taken her far into his thoughts. She recognized in his story one of those ethical paradoxes which the helpless Jews of the Pale, in their search for a weapon that their oppressors could not confiscate, have evolved for their self-defence. She knew that to many honest Jewish minds a lie was not a lie when told to an official; and she divined that no ghost of a scruple had disturbed Mr. Rudinsky in his sense of triumph over circumstances, when he invented the lie that was to insure the education of his gifted child. With David, of course, the same philosophy had been valid. His father's plan for the protection of his future, hingeing on a too familiar sophistry, had dropped innocuous into his consciousness, until, in a moment of spiritual sensitiveness, it took on the visage of sin.

'And what do *you* think, ma'am?'

David's father did not have to wait a moment for her answer, so readily did her insight come to his defense. In a few eager sentences she made him feel that she understood perfectly, and understood David perfectly.

'I respect you the more for that lie, Mr. Rudinsky. It was — a *noble* lie!' There was the least tremor in her voice. 'And I love David for the way *he* sees it.'

Mr. Rudinsky got up and paced slowly across the room. Then he stopped before Miss Ralston.

'You are very kind to talk like that, Miss Ralston,' he said, with peculiar dignity. 'You see the whole thing. In the old country we had to do such things so many times that we — got used to them. Here — here we don't have to.' His voice took on a musing quality. 'But we don't see it right away when we get here. I meant nothing, only just to keep my boy in school. It was not to cheat anybody. The state is willing to educate the children. I said to myself I will tie my own hands, so that I can't pull my

child after me if I drown. I did want my David should have the best chance in America.'

Miss Ralston was thrilled by the suppressed passion in his voice. She held out her hand to him, saying again, in the low tones that come from the heart, 'I am glad I know you, Mr. Rudinsky.'

There was unconscious chivalry in Mr. Rudinsky's next words. Stepping to his wife's side, he laid a gentle hand on her shoulder, and said quietly, 'My wife has been my helper in everything.'

Miss Ralston, as we know, was given to seeing things. She saw now, not a poor immigrant couple in the first stage of American respectability, which was all there was in the room to see, but a phantom procession of men with the faces of prophets, muffled in striped praying-shawls, and women radiant in the light of many candles, and youths and maidens with smouldering depths in their eyes, and silent children who pushed away joyous things for — for —

Dreams don't use up much time. Mr. Rudinsky was not aware that there had been a pause before he spoke again.

'You understand so well, Miss Ralston. But David' — he hesitated a moment, then finished quickly. 'How can he respect me if he feels like that?'

His wife spoke tremulously from her corner.

'That's what I think.'

'Oh, don't think that!' Miss Ralston cried. 'He does respect you — he understands. Don't you see what he says: *I can't tell you — because you would blame somebody who did n't do wrong.* He does n't blame you. He only blames himself. He's afraid to tell me because he thinks *I* can't understand.'

The teacher laughed a happy little laugh. In her eagerness to comfort David's parents, she said just the right things, and every word summed up an instantaneous dis-

covery. One of her useful gifts was the ability to find out truths just when she desperately needed them. There are people like that, and some of them are school-teachers hired by the year. When David's father cried, 'How can he respect me?' Miss Ralston's heart was frightened while it beat one beat. Only one. Then she knew all David's thoughts between the terrible, 'I have lied,' and the generous, 'But my father did no wrong. She guessed what the struggle had cost to reconcile the contradictions; she imagined his bewilderment as he tried to rule himself by his new-found standards, while seeking excuses for his father in the one he cast away from him as unworthy of an American. Problems like David's are not very common, but then Miss Ralston was good at guessing.

'Don't worry, Mr. Rudinsky,' she said, looking out of her glad eyes. 'And you, Mrs. Rudinsky, don't think for a moment that David does n't understand. He's had a bad time, the poor boy, but I know — Oh, I must speak to him! Will he wake soon, do you think?'

Mr. Rudinsky left the room without a word.

'It's all right,' said David's mother, in reply to an anxious look from Miss Ralston. 'He sleeps already the whole afternoon.'

It had grown almost dark while they talked. Mrs. Rudinsky now lighted the lamps, apologizing to her guest for not having done so sooner, and then she released Bennie from his prolonged attendance in the store.

Bennie came into the kitchen chewing his reward, some very gummy confection. He was obliged to look the pent-up things he wanted to say, until such time as he could clear his clogged talking-gear.

'Teacher,' he began, before he had finished swallowing, 'What for did you say —'

'Bennie!' his mother reproved him, 'You must shame yourself to listen by the door.'

'Well, there was n't any trade, ma,' he defended himself, 'only Bessie Katz, and she brought back the peppermints she bought this morning, to change them for taffy, but I did n't because they were all dirty, and one was broken —'

Bennie never had a chance to bring his speeches to a voluntary stop: somebody always interrupted. This time it was his father, who came down the stairs, looking so grave that even Bennie was impressed.

'He's awake,' said Mr. Rudinsky. 'I lighted the lamp. Will you please come up, ma'am?'

He showed her to the room where David lay, and closed the door on them both. It was not he, but Miss Ralston, the American teacher, that his boy needed. He went softly down to the kitchen, where his wife smiled at him through unnecessary tears.

Miss Ralston never forgot the next hour, and David never forgot. The woman always remembered how the boy's eyes burned through the dusk of the shadowed corner where he lay. The boy remembered how his teacher's voice palpitated in his heart, how her cool hands rested on his, how the lamplight made a halo out of her hair. To each of them the dim room with its scant furnishings became a spiritual rendezvous.

What did the woman say, that drew the sting of remorse from the child's heart, without robbing him of the bloom of his idealism? What did she tell him that transmuted the offense of ages into the marrow and blood of persecuted virtue? How did she weld in the boy's consciousness the scraps of his mixed inheritance, so that he saw his whole experience as an unbroken thing at last? There was nobody to report how it was done. The woman did not know nor the child. It was a secret born of the boy's need and

the woman's longing to serve him; just as in nature every want creates its satisfaction.

When she was ready to leave him, Miss Ralston knelt for a moment at David's bedside, and once more took his small hot hands in hers.

'And I have made a discovery, David,' she said, smiling in a way of her own. 'Talking with your parents downstairs I saw why it was that the Russian Jews are so soon at home here in our dear country. In the hearts of men like your father, dear, is the true America.'

BLUE REEFERS

BY ELIZABETH ASHE

'THE child will have to have a new dress if she 's to take part in the Christmas entertainment.'

My mother spoke very low, so as not to wake me, but I heard her. I had been too excited to fall asleep.

'Of course,' said my father in his big voice that never could get down to a whisper.

'S-sh,' warned my mother; and then added, 'But we should n't get it, George. You know what the last doctor's bill amounted to.'

'Oh, let the little thing have it. It 's her first chance to show off.'

'S-sh,' my mother warned again. After a moment I heard her say, 'Well, perhaps it won't cost so very much, and as you say it 's the first time.'

I turned over in bed and prayed, 'Dear Lord, please help my mother to get me a new dress.' For a new dress was one of the chief joys of taking part, and I had longed so to take part.

Although I had been a member of our Sunday school in good and regular standing ever since I was three weeks old, and had been put on the Cradle Roll, that being in the eyes of my parents the nearest approach to dedication allowable to Baptists, I was taking part for the first time, and I was seven. There had been numerous occasions in these seven years for taking part: our Sunday school celebrated Easter, Children's Day, Anniversary Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, with quite appropriate exercises. But it was a large school, and I had freckles and what

Aunt Emma, my cousin Luella's mother, called 'that child's jaw.' Aunt Emma meant my front teeth, which were really most dreadfully prominent: in fact they stuck out to such an extent that Aunt Emma seldom failed to see them when she saw me.

Aunt Emma was n't used to children with jaws. Her little Luella had the prettiest teeth imaginable: she was pretty all over, pretty golden hair, pretty blue eyes, pretty pink cheeks, — not a freckle, — and pretty arms very plump and white. She was just my age, and she was invariably asked to take part. It seemed reasonable that she should, and yet I felt that if they only knew that I had a mind, — a mind was what an uncle once said I had, after hearing me recite the one hundred and third Psalm, the fifty-second chapter of Isaiah, and the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, with only one mistake, — they would ask me too. A mind should count for something, I thought, but it did n't seem to with Miss Miriam.

Miss Miriam was the assistant superintendent. She was a tall, thin, youngish-looking woman, with fair hair and a sweet, rather white face. She always wore very black dresses and a little gold cross, which one of the Big Girls told us was left to her by her mother, who was an Episcopalian. Miss Miriam got up all the entertainments, and it was she who made out the list of the people who were to take part in them. Three or four Sundays before an entertainment was to be given, Miss Miriam would come from the Big Room to our Primary Department with a lot of little white slips in her hand and a pad and pencil. While we were having the closing exercises, she would walk very quietly from class to class distributing the little white slips. The slips said, 'Please meet me after Sunday school in the Ladies' Parlor.' If you were given a slip, it meant you were chosen to take part.

Once I confided my longing to my mother.

'What makes you want to so much, Martha? You're not a forward little girl, I hope.'

Forwardness in my elders' opinion was the Eighth Deadly Sin, to be abhorred by all little girls, especially those who had heard it said that they had a mind. Little girls who had heard that might so easily, from sheer pride of intellect, become 'forward.'

'I'm not forward,' I assured her. 'I — I, oh, mother, it 's so nice to be in things.'

And now at last I was in things. I could still feel the touch of the white slip which had been put into my hand only that afternoon; and I turned over in my bed on my other side and prayed with even more fervor.

'O Lord, please help my mother to get me a new dress.'

He did. A week later my mother went to town. She brought back white Persian lawn, the softest, sheerest stuff I had ever felt. I could see the pink of my skin through it when I laid it over my hand.

'I'm going to have a new dress for the entertainment,' I told Luella on my way to rehearsal. 'Are you?'

'Why, of course. I always do. Mine 's going to have five rows of lace insertion in the skirt and tiny tucks too.'

'Mine's to have tucks, but it won't have but one row of lace in the skirt. Mother says little girls' dresses don't need much lace.'

'I like lots of lace,' said Luella; but her tone of finality did not disturb my happiness. I was disturbed only when, at another rehearsal, Luella told me that her mother was making a blue-silk slip to wear under her white dress. Almost everyone wore slips when they spoke pieces.

I gave my mother this information.

'Is n't the white dress pretty enough, Martha?'

I fingered the soft material she was sewing. 'It 's beau-

tiful,' I said, hiding my face in her neck. Then I whispered, 'I don't mind if Luella has a slip, mother.'

I did mind, but I knew I ought n't.

My mother raised my head and adjusted the bow on one of my skimpy little pigtails. She looked as she did sometimes after my Aunt Emma had just gone.

'We 'll see if you can have a slip. What color would you like — supposing you can?'

'Pink,' I answered promptly, 'like my best hair-ribbons.'

Pink china silk was bought. When I tried it under the Persian lawn it matched the ribbons exactly. I jiggled up and down on my toes — my only way of expressing great joy.

The dress, when my mother was not working on it, lay in the spare room on the bed. I made countless pilgrimages to the spare room. Once I slipped the dress on by myself. I wanted to see how I looked. But the mirror of the spare-room bureau was very small; so I inserted a hair-brush. With the mirror tipped I could see quite all of me — only I did n't see quite all. I did n't see my freckles, or my jaw, or my very thin legs. I saw a glory of pink and white, and I grinned from sheer rapture.

The spare room had no heat: there was a register, but unless we had company the register was closed. My mother found me one day kneeling by the bed, shivering, but in ecstatic contemplation of my dress, which I had not dared to try on a second time. She gave me ginger tea. I gulped it down meekly. I felt even then that as a punishment ginger tea is exquisitely relevant. It chastens the soul but at the same time it warms the stomach you've allowed to get cold.

I had been very much afraid that before the night of the entertainment, — it was to be given the twenty-third of December, — something would surely happen to my dress

or to me; but the night arrived and both were in a perfect state of preservation. To expedite matters, as the Sunday school was to assemble at a quarter past seven, my mother dressed me before supper. Just as the last button was fastened, we heard footsteps on the front porch.

'There, Martha! Go show your father.'

I ran down into the hall and took up my position in the centre of it; but when I heard the key turn in the latch of the inside door I wanted to run away and hide. I had never felt so beautiful.

My father stopped short when he saw me. 'By the Lord!' he ejaculated.

'Why, George!'

My mother was on the stairs.

'Well, by the Great Guns then — you 're a — a vision, Marty.' I could only grin.

'Here's some more pinkness for you to wear,' he said, producing a long tissue-paper package that he had been holding behind his back. He chuckled as he unwrapped it. 'Twelve, Marty; twelve solid pink carnations. What do you say to 'em? Show your mother.'

I said nothing. I only jiggled on my toes.

'George, dear, what made you? A little child like that can't wear flowers — and they 're seventy-five cents a dozen!'

All the chuckle went out of my father's eyes: he looked at me, then at the carnations, then at my mother, just like a little boy who finds that after all he's done the wrong thing. I wanted to run and take his hand; but while I stood, wanting and not daring, my mother had crossed the hall and was putting her arms around his neck.

'They 're beautiful, George dear. She can wear three or four of them, anyway. They will make her so happy, and the rest we'll put in her room. Her room is pink too.'

'So it is.' He kissed my mother and then me. 'Say your piece, Marty — quick! Before we have supper.'

I had learned my piece so thoroughly that the order was like turning on a spigot. Four verses, four lines in each, gushed forth.

My father clapped. 'Now for something to eat,' he said.

Immediately after supper my mother and I set out, leaving my father to shave and come later. It was a cold night with a great many bright stars. At the corner we met Luella and her mother. Luella's mother was carrying over her arm Luella's spring coat, her everyday one, a dark blue reefer.

'Martha ought to have hers along, too,' said my Aunt Emma. 'If the church should be chilly they'll catch their death sitting in thin dresses.'

My mother thought it was probable we would. So I was sent back to hunt for my little reefer. It was like Luella's, dark blue with tarnished gilt anchors on the corners of the sailor collar, and like hers it was second-best and outgrown.

Luella and I parted with our mothers at the door of the Sunday school room.

'Don't forget to take your reefers when you march in,' admonished my Aunt Emma.

'Must we carry them while we march?' I almost wailed.

My mother came to the rescue. 'Hold them down between you and the little girl you march with. Then no one will see.'

'Yes'm.' I was much relieved.

The Sunday school was a hubbub of noise and pink and blue hair-ribbons. In among the ribbons, and responsible for some of the noise, were close-cropped heads and white collars and very new ties, but you did n't notice them much. There were so many pink and blue ribbons. After

a while the room quieted down and we formed in line. Miss Miriam, who even that night wore a black dress and her little gold cross, distributed among us the eight silk banners which, when we were n't marching, always hung on the walls of the Sunday school rooms. There were subdued whispers and last prinkings. Then the piano, which had been moved into the church, gave the signal and we marched in.

We marched with our banners and our pink and blue hair-ribbons up and down the aisles so that all the Mothers-and-Fathers-and-Friends-of-the-School could see us. Whenever we recognized our own special mother or father, we beamed. The marching finally brought us to the pews assigned to our respective classes. Luella's class and mine were to sit together that night. I turned round — almost every little girl, after she was seated and had sufficiently smoothed out skirts and sash, turned round — and saw that my mother and aunt were only two pews behind us. I grinned delightedly at them, and they both nodded back. Then I told Luella. After that I settled down.

The church was decorated with ropes of green and with holly wreaths. At either side of the platform was a Christmas tree with bits of cotton-batting scattered over it to represent snow. I had heard that there were to be two Christmas trees, and I had looked forward to a dazzling glitter of colored balls and tinsel and candles, maybe. The cotton-batting was a little disappointing. It made you feel that it was not a real Christmas tree, but just a church Christmas tree. Church things were seldom real. The Boys Brigade of our church carried interesting-looking cartridge-boxes, that made them look like real soldiers; but when they drilled you found out that the cartridge-boxes were only make-believe. They held Bibles. Still, the cotton-batting did make you think of snow

After what seemed like a very long wait the entertainment began. The minister, of course, opened it with prayer. Then we all sang a carol. As we were sitting down I felt some one poke my shoulder.

'Your mother says you must put on your jacket. She says you'll take cold,' whispered the little girl behind me.

I had not felt cold, but the command passed along over two church pews had the force of a Thus-saith-the-Lord. While I was slipping the jacket carefully over my ruffles, some one poked Luella and whispered to her. Luella looked at me, then put on her jacket.

The superintendent was making a speech to the Fathers-and-Mothers-and-Friends-of-the-School. When he finished, we rose to sing another carol, and as we rose, quite automatically Luella and I slipped off our jackets. I was very excited. After the carol there would be a piece by one of the Big Girls; then the Infant Class would do something; then I was to speak. I wondered if people would see the pink of my slip showing through my dress as I spoke my piece. I bent my head to get a whiff of carnation.

We were just seated when there came another poke and another whisper.

'Your mother says to keep on your jacket.

I looked back at my mother. She smiled and nodded, and Aunt Emma pointed to Luella. We put on our jackets again. This time I buttoned it tight; so did Luella. I felt the carnations remonstrate, but when one is very excited one is very obedient: one obeys more than the letter of the law.

The Big Girl was speaking her piece. I did n't hear the words; the words of my own piece were saying themselves through my head; but I was aware that she stopped suddenly, that she looked as though she were trying to remember, that someone prompted her, that she went on. Sup-

pose I should forget that way, before my father and mother and the friends of the school and Miss Miriam! It was a dreadful thought. I commenced again, — with my eyes shut, —

'Some children think that Christmas day
Should come two times a year.'

I went through my verses five times, while the Infant Class individually and collectively were holding up gilt cardboard bells and singing about them. I was beginning the sixth time, —

'Some children think, — '

when the superintendent read out, —

'The next number on the programme will be a recitation by Martha Smith.'

I had been expecting this announcement for four weeks, but now that it came, it gave me a queer feeling in my heart and stomach, half-fear, half-joy. Conscious only that I was actually taking part, I rose from my seat and made my way over the little girls in the pew, who scrunched up themselves and their dresses into a small space so that I might pass.

As I started down the aisle I thought I heard my name frantically called behind me; but not dreaming that any one would wish to have speech with a person about to speak a piece, I kept on down, way, way down to the platform, walking in a dim hot maze which smelled insistently of carnations.

But the poor carnations warned in vain. I ascended the platform steps with my reefer still buttoned tightly over my chest.

The reefer, as I have said, was dark blue, adorned with tarnished anchors, and outgrown. Being outgrown, it showed several inches of my thin little wrists, and being a

reefer and tightly buttoned, it showed of my pink and white glory a little more than the hem.

Still in that dim hot maze, I made my bow and gave the title of my piece, 'Christmas Twice a Year,' and recited it from beginning to end, and heard them clap, all the teachers and scholars and Fathers-and-Mothers-and-Friends-of-the-School. Then, quite dizzied with happiness, I hurried down off the platform and up the aisle. People smiled as I passed them and I smiled back, for once quite unconscious of my jaw. As I neared my seat I prepared to smile upon my mother, but for a moment she did n't see me. Aunt Emma was saying something to her, something that I did n't hear, something that made two red spots flame in my mother's face.

'Is n't it just like Martha to be a little fool! She 's always doing things like that.'

Aunt Emma was one of those people who assume that you always do the particular foolish thing you have just finished doing.

The red spots died out when my mother saw me. She smiled as though she were very proud — and I was proud too. But before I could settle down to enjoy my satisfaction, Luella's name had been called and Luella was starting down the aisle. Luella's golden curls bobbed as she walked: they bobbed over her blue reefer jacket which was buttoned snugly over her plump body.

There was a suppressed exclamation from some one behind me, but Luella kept on. Luella's jacket was not short in the sleeves, but it was very very tight. Only the hem of her blue and white glory peeped from beneath it, and a little piece of ruffle she had not quite tucked in peeped out from above it.

Luella bowed and spoke her piece. All the teachers and scholars, all the Fathers-and-Mothers-and-Friends-of-the-School applauded.

A queer sound made me look round at my mother and aunt. Their heads were bowed upon the pew in front. Their shoulders were shaking. When I turned around again they were sitting up, wiping their eyes as if they had been crying.

I could not understand then, nor did I understand late that night when my father's laugh woke me up.

'Poor Emma!' he chuckled. 'What did she say?'

And my mother answered, her voice curiously smothered, 'Why, you see, she could n't very well say anything after what she had just said before.'

'I suppose not. Poor Emma, I suppose not.'

My father's laugh broke out again.

'S-sh, George — you 'll wake Martha.'

THE DEBT

BY KATHLEEN CARMAN

The convent was a large square building of red brick, harsh of outline, unlovely in its proportions. It stood on the rise of a barren hill, unfriended by the trees of the little valley below, unsoftened by the pleasant landscape above which its ugly bulk arose, stern and domineering. To the south and west lay fertile fields and huddling farm-buildings; to the east, beyond the little valley, rose many closely wooded hills; while to the north, — ah, the north! — one of the greatest wonders of all this wonderful world lay there; for if one climbed to the highest story of the convent and looked out of any window to the north, one beheld that never-ceasing miracle — the sea!

Sister Anne had known no other home but the convent for nearly half a century, but the sight of those unresting waves never failed to set her spirit free: free of unknown and enchanted worlds, worlds of wonder, of mystery, and of heart-stirring beauty. She was merely a plain, silent, hard-working, rather stupid old woman, who had never been in all her life admired or considered, or even loved, unless one counts the tepid affection of those with whom she lived. She had been brought here as a young girl from the orphanage where she had passed her childhood; and since she had been one of those who are always willing to do what is asked of them, no matter how unpleasant or hard it may be, there had fallen to her share all the humblest and meanest of the household tasks, all the petty drudgeries which must be done and which no one wishes to do. Her place was always in the kitchen or the laundry.

She would have liked to cook, but that had never been suggested. She had always been put to washing dishes. Here again she had a preference: she would have liked to wash the glassware, which came out of the hot suds like bubbles and must be polished on the softest and cleanest of towels; or even the clumsy plated forks and spoons, which to her were very beautiful. There was nothing delicate or lovely about the great iron soup-kettles which her patient hands must cleanse, or about the greasy roasting pans. And it was the same way in the laundry. Only the coarsest, heaviest of the washing was given to her: the rag mats that lay beside the beds in the dormitories, the big aprons that the working sisters wore, the cloths that were used in cleaning the lamps. Not for her the intricacies of starching and skillful ironing and fluting.

Yet all the years of toil had not saddened Sister Anne. If any one had questioned her and she had been able to express herself, she might have said that the forces which had formed her sturdy body had given her also a spirit capable of sustaining itself on the most meagre happiness. But no one questioned her, and she was at all times slow and scant of speech.

The sources of her contentment lay all without the convent walls; and being there, it was strange that she should have discovered them. As a matter of fact she had not discovered them. They had come, through a slow and unconscious process, to be a part of her life. It had begun, humbly enough, in the kitchen garden. When first she came to the convent she had not been very well, and they had set her to weeding the vegetables in order that she might be out of doors as much as possible. Her simple, kindly nature had turned in solicitude and affection to this springing life that responded to her tendance. No great and lovely lady in her garden ever looked with more pride

and admiration on her roses and lilies than did Sister Anne on her beans and cabbages and early peas. Through them she had come to watch with interest every change in the weather, anxious for the needed rain, fearful of the early frost, rejoicing when sun and air and moisture did their kindly best.

And thus it was, through a process simple, gradual, inevitable, that her heart had wakened to the wonder and the beauty of the world about her. At first she saw no farther than the garden, finding joy in the clear green of the new shoots, pleasure in the sturdy growth of some robust plant, or a still ecstasy in the dew-crowned freshness of the bean flowers in the early morning. But soon that morning magic lay before her marveling eyes upon the near-by fields and the distant hills, and in time she beheld the wonderful pageant from mystic dawn to dawn, and that still more wonderful pageant of the changing months.

No one knew or guessed the joy that filled her life from this dumb intercourse with flying cloud or snow-hung cherry tree, or from the deep stillness of a green-clad hill in a summer noon. When she was younger, she used sometimes to speak of these things to her companions; but she had early learned that they neither understood nor cared to understand the feelings which she would have shared with them. But this did not disturb her. She felt for those with whom she lived good-will and a mild affection, but hers was not a nature to expect or need sympathy. She had a profound and sincere humility which rendered her incapable of envy. She felt herself, without bitterness, to be the inferior of all with whom she came in contact. The fact that they were indifferent to what were to her the purest sources of happiness never seemed to her a lack in them, but only an accentuation of the fact that she was less clever than they. To read, to embroider, to converse,

to make long devotions, were all beyond her powers. She was not 'spiritual-minded.' Prayers were to her a tedious and difficult task, to be fulfilled conscientiously but always finished with relief. This indeed came by slow degrees to be a source of pain and anxiety to her. She felt herself a sinner. In the laborious and inarticulate processes of her mind there gradually took form the knowledge that she would rather do any kind of work than pray; that she would rather, far rather, sit in idleness, looking out upon the familiar, beloved landscape, than pray. This seemed to her inexplicably wicked, but it never occurred to her to change, although she sometimes felt that she would go to hell because of it.

Such thoughts were, however, neither frequent nor enduring with her. When she made her preparation for confession, she used sometimes to endeavor to formulate this general sense of wrongdoing; but the matter was too subtle for her limited powers of expression, and she never got beyond the specific instance, as when she neglected the kettles so that she might watch a storm coming up across the hills, or walked five miles on a singing May morning to get a not indispensable supply of fresh eggs from a farmhouse. Not for many penances would she have foregone the clean joy of that walk. Spring came late and slowly to this bit of world beside the sea, but came none the less surely, none the less with magic and enchantment in its wings; the new color on field and hill, the wonderful smell of the earth and of the budding shoots, the divine air, that now blew chill and austere as from the cave of winter itself and now touched the cheek with a shyness, a softness, a warmth, like early love.

Sister Anne had no imagery. She was sixty years old, ignorant, unread, unimaginative, slow and dull of wit. Yet walking through this newly-created world, she felt that joy

more keen than pain — that wordless ecstasy whose channel is the senses, but which sends the spirit groping back toward God who gave it life. Although she felt that this marvelous universe came from the beneficent hand of some supreme Good, she never identified it with the Deity to whom she made her difficult devotions. Deep in her heart there grew a strong sense of gratitude, of obligation, a wish vague and unformed, yet compelling, that in some way she might make return for the happiness which life had brought her.

She tried to spend more time in the chapel and to say an extra number of Aves; but this did not satisfy her, and even her unseeking mind felt some doubt as to the worth of such mechanical and joyless prayers.

So the placid months and years slipped by, and at last there came to Sister Anne, as does not come to all of us, her great hour.

It was a cloudless, windless, intolerably hot day in midsummer. Sister Anne had been on an errand to a fisherman's hut at some distance from the convent. As she walked slowly home through the woods, she reached a place in the path which led near the shore and from which a few steps brought her out upon a little promontory. Never, it seemed to her, had the sea looked so blue or the sails of the distant ships so white. She stood for a long time gazing out toward the horizon before she saw anything nearer; but when she did see, she hurried down to where she could get out on the beach. On a tiny rocky islet some two hundred feet or so from the shore lay the figure of a man in a swimming-suit. It was evident that he was either dead or unconscious.

Sister Anne considered for a while and then without even removing her shoes, waded out to him. He was not dead, she found at once, but stunned by a blow on the head, ap-

parently from one of the sharp rocks on which he lay. Sister Anne cleansed and bound the wound with her kerchief, and then sat for a few moments, her face grave and perplexed. Her bit of human wreckage was only a boy of sixteen or so, tall, slender, with thick, rough blond hair and skin fair as a child's. Sister Anne, by putting forth her whole strength, had been able to move him only a few inches so that it was manifestly impossible for her to get him to the shore. The fisherman's hut from which she had just come was deserted, its owner off on a cruise; there was not even a boat there. The convent was a good three quarters of an hour away, make what haste she would, and it would take as much longer to return with help. In an hour, she well knew, the islet would be submerged by the rising tide. She knew of no other fishing-hut and of no farmhouse nearer than the convent.

The water had been nearly to her waist in one place as she came, and she could see that it had risen a little, even in this short time. She took off her black robe and did what she could with its aid to put the helpless lad in a more comfortable position; then, desperately, by every means at her command, she set about restoring him to consciousness. For a long time she met no response to her efforts. Indeed, more than once she anxiously leaned her ear against his chest, to be sure that his heart still beat. At last, when she had almost given up, discouraged, he made a slight sound, and a moment later tried to sit up, only to sink back into coma again. In a few minutes more, however, he opened his eyes and looked at her with manifest intelligence. Instantly she spoke to him with all the urgency she could summon.

'You must swim ashore as soon as you can. The tide is coming in and if you stay here you will be drowned, unless you are able to swim. If you can start now you will be able

to walk part of the way between here and the beach; but part you must swim, even now.'

Again he struggled to sit up and this time succeeded, although for a moment he had to lean against Sister Anne's shoulder.

'As soon as you are able,' she reiterated anxiously, 'you must swim ashore.'

He shifted himself and gazed at her in considerable perplexity.

'Do you know how I hurt my head?' he asked. 'I must have fallen as I was climbing up here. And how did you come here?'

'I was passing,' Sister Anne explained, 'and I saw you lying here. I waded out to you. The water was not as deep then. Now — '

She paused, and a look of fear and anguish grew in her dull eyes.

'You cannot swim?' asked the boy.

'Oh, no, no!' she answered, her head sinking on her breast.

'Yet you stayed here to help me when you might have got safe ashore if you had left me? Did you know that you would be caught by the tide?'

'I am old,' she answered; 'it must come to me before many years in any case. But you are so young. I could not leave you. Your mother — '

The boy looked at her a moment with shining eyes and flushing face. Then he rose cautiously, and tentatively flexed the muscles of his legs and arms.

'Will you take off your shoes?' he said gently.

She gazed at him in bewilderment, and he explained to her carefully what he would do and what she must do. It took some time to make her understand, for her slow mind had not compassed such a possibility; but when once it

was clear to her what was to be done, she was docility itself. Well for Sister Anne now that the strongest habit of her life was obedience. But for that, the lad, strong swimmer as he was, could not have brought her safe to shore.

That night the placid life of the convent throbbed and thrilled with an excitement unknown in its history. Sister Anne, for the first time in her existence, was the centre of a storm of solicitude, of attention, of agitation. She herself was unmoved. She came back from death as unemotionally as she had gone to meet it. She sat by the window of her room, wishing that she might be left alone to watch the moon rise above the quiet hills.

The Mother Superior, the curé himself, had visited her, had said strange and wonderful things to her which she scarcely understood. The whole Sisterhood buzzed about her like a hive, for it seemed that the fair-skinned lad of her adventure was the heir of a house whose name was famous in many lands, and the father was even now standing at her threshold.

Sister Anne was not embarrassed by the great presence, fame and wealth and high birth and all the glories of this world being indeed less than words to her. Moreover, her visitor brought to this interview with an old unlettered woman all the charm and suavity and tact of which he was so well the master. The tale his son had told had seemed to him incredible and touching, and he felt a desire to understand the impulses which had made possible so singular an episode. He soon found that she had indeed faced death in full knowledge of what she did; that she had wittingly given up her chance of escape that the boy might have his. But to find the motive was not so simple. Delicately he probed one channel after another: duty, heroism, religious training, in none of these could he find the clue. Her life,

he reflected, could hardly have been so full of happiness as to have attached her very strongly to this world, and deftly he pursued that trail, still unsuccessfully.

Baffled for the moment, he was silent, watching her unrevealing face. The late summer twilight was darkening into deep shadows on the hillside, but the eastern sky was still clear yellow from the sunset. Just beyond that bank of clouds, Sister Anne thought, the moon would rise before long. The man beside her, still pondering his problem, made some comment on the clustering trees in the valley below.

She turned to him at once with a changed look.

'They are at their thickest now,' was all she said; but he saw that at last he had opened the closed door.

In a few moments more, under his skillful touch, were revealed to him the simple and profound sources of happiness on which her spirit fed. In sentences so incomplete, in thoughts so inarticulate as to be mere suggestion, he comprehended her, and at length, with infinite gentleness, drew forth the thread of explanation which he had sought so patiently.

She had felt for long, he gathered, that she owed a heavy debt in return for all the joy in life that had been hers. She felt that her life had held more happiness than she deserved, happiness for which she had made, it seemed to her, but inadequate return. When she had found the helpless lad, she had found also, it seemed, her chance of payment. If she might save his life or at least give her own in the effort, this debt that she owed the world would be lessened.

When she had managed in some fashion to convey this much to her sympathetic listener, she paused and looked at him wistfully.

'A human life,' he said, in instant response, 'is worth more than words can measure. You gave the greatest gift

in your power. Be content. When you behold the sunlight on the sea to-morrow, say to yourself, "But for me there is one on whom the sun would not shine to-day." '

She looked at him in silence, and he saw her breast rise and fall in one slow breath as if of relief.

A little longer he sat, considering, in strange humility, this old and humble woman toward whom he had had such generous intentions. What of the many gifts in his power might he offer that could enrich her life? Nothing! Nothing to give to this poor, lonely, ignorant, toil-worn being who in her starved existence had found more joy than she could make return for!

Once more he thanked her in his son's name and his own, and with as careful a courtesy as if she had been his sovereign, bade her farewell.

The moon had climbed above the bank of clouds now, and the hillside lay transfigured in its light. Sister Anne leaned her head against the window-casing and looked for a while into the still summer night; then presently, being very weary, she slept, a dreamless sleep.

SETH MILES AND THE SACRED FIRE

BY CORNELIA A. P. COMER

I

'RICHARD,' said my dad about a week after Commencement, 'life is real. You have had your education and your keep, and you're a pleasant enough lad around the house. But the time has come to see what 's in you, and I want you to begin to show it right away. If you go to the coast with the family, it will mean three months fooling around with the yacht and the cars and a bunch of pretty girls. There's nothing in that for you any longer.'

Of course, this rubbed me the wrong way.

'Now you 've got your degree, it 's time we started something else. You say you want to be a scholar — I suppose that means a college professor. Of course scholarship does n't pay, but if I leave you a few good bonds, probably you can clip the coupons while you last. I don't insist that you make money, but I do insist that you work. My son must be able to lick his weight in wild-cats, whatever job he's on. Do you get me?'

I looked out of the window and nodded, somewhat haughtily. Of course I could n't explain to dad the mixture of feelings that led me to choose scholarship. For, while I am keen on philology, and really do love the classics so that my spirit seems to swim, if you know what I mean, in the atmosphere that upheld Horace and the wise Cicero of 'De Senectute,' I also thought there was money enough in the family already. Was n't it a good thing for the Bonniwells to pay tribute to the humanities in my person? Did n't we, somehow, owe it to the world to put back in culture part of

what we took out in cash? But how could I get that across to dad?

He looked at me as if he, too, were trying to utter something difficult.

'There are passions of the head as well as of the heart,' he said finally. I opened my eyes, for he did n't often talk in such fashion. 'The old Greeks knew that. I always supposed a scholar, a teacher, had to feel that way if he was any good — that it was the mark of his calling. Perhaps you've been called; but, if so, you keep it pretty dark.'

He stopped and waited for an appropriate response, but I just could n't get it out. So I remarked, 'If I'm not on the boat this summer, you'll need another man when you cruise.'

'That's my affair,' said he, looking disappointed. 'Yours will be to hold down your job. I've got one ready for you. If you don't like it, you can get another. We 'll see about a Ph.D. and Germany later on. But for this season, I had influence enough to get you the summer school in the Jericho district beyond Garibaldi, and you can board with Seth Miles.'

When I was a child, before we moved to Chicago, we lived in Oatesville, at the back of beyond. Garibaldi is an Indiana cross-roads about five miles farther on the road to nowhere.

'*O dad!*' I said; but I put everything I thought into those two words.

He instantly began to look as much like the heavy father on the stage as is possible to a spare man with a Roman nose. So I shrugged my shoulders.

'Oh, very well!' I said. 'If you find me a fossil in the fall, pick out a comfortable museum to lend me to, won't you?'

'Richard.' said my dad, 'God only knows how a boy should be dealt with. I don't. If I could only tell you the

things I know so you would believe them, I'd set a match to half my fortune this minute. I want you to *touch life* somewhere, but I don't know how to work it in. I'm doing this in sheer desperation.'

I could see he meant it, too, for his eyes were shiny and the little drops came out on his forehead.

'I don't happen to know anybody fitter than old Miles to inspire a scholar and a gentleman. So, if the summer does n't do you any good, it can't do you any harm. I shall label your season's work "Richard Bonniwell, Jr. on His Own Hook. Exhibit A." — Don't forget that. Your mother and I may seem to be in Maine, but I guess in our minds we'll be down at Jericho schoolhouse looking on, most of the time.'

You'd think a man might buck up in response to that, would n't you? But I did n't particularly. It made me feel superior toward dad because he did n't know any better than to arrange such a summer, thinking it would teach me anything. I suspected this indulgent attitude of mine might break down later, and it did.

It was a blazing hot summer for one thing. One of those occasional summers of the Middle West when the cattle pant in the fields and the blades of corn get limp on their stalks.

Mr. Miles, who was a benign bachelor, lived in a brick farmhouse with one long wing, and a furnace of which he was very proud. He put up his own ice, too, which was more to the point in July. His widowed sister kept house for him, and, if the meat was usually tough, the cream and vegetables were beyond praise. He owned the store at Garibaldi as well as this large farm; so he was a man of means, and important in his own sphere. To look at, he was rather wonderful. I don't know how to describe him. He had keen, kind blue eyes; wavy, white hair; strong,

regular features. There was a kind of graciousness and distinction about him that did n't fit his speech and dress. It was as if you always saw the man he might be in the shadow of the man he was. Put him into evening clothes and take away his vernacular, and he'd be one of the loveliest old patriarchs you ever met.

The schoolhouse was brick, too; set back from the road in a field of hard-trodden clay, decorated with moth-eaten patches of grass. For further adornment, there was a row of box-alders out in front. As a temple of learning, it fell short. As its ministrant, I did the same.

There were forty scholars: squirmy, grimy little things that I found it hard to tell apart at first. I knew this was not the right attitude, but how could I help it? I had never tried to teach anybody anything before in my life. The bigger girls blushed and giggled; the little boys made faces and stuck out their tongues. As it was a summer session, there were no big boys to speak of.

To go in for scholarship does not at all imply the teacher's gift or the desire for it. At Oxford, you know, they are a bit sniffy about the lecturers who arouse enthusiasm. Such are suspected of being 'popular,' and that, really, is quite awful. Some of our men have a similar notion, and, no doubt, it colored my views. Yet, deep down, I knew that if I was a teacher, it was up to me to teach. I really did try, but it takes time to get the hang of anything.

I was homesick, too. Mildred and Millicent, my kid sisters, are great fun, and the house is full of young people all summer long at home. When I shut my eyes I could see the blue, sparkling waters of the inlet, and the rocking of our float with its line of gay canoes.

How can I describe the rising tide of sick disgust at my surroundings that began to flood my spirit? Now that it 's all in the past, I'd like to think it was purely my liver, —

I did n't get enough exercise, really I did n't, for it was too hot to walk much, — but perhaps part of it was just bad temper.

You see, it takes a good deal of a fellow to stand such a complete transplanting. I hated the paper shades in my bedroom, tied up with a cord, and the Nottingham curtains, and the springs that sank in the middle. I hated the respectable Brussels carpet in the best room, and the red rocking-chairs on the porch. I hated the hot, sleepless nights and the blazing, drowsy days.

Oh, I tell you, I had a glorious grouch!

I did n't exactly hate the squirming children, for some of them began to show signs of almost human intelligence after they got used to me, and that did win me; but I hated that little schoolroom where the flies buzzed loudly all day long on the streaky panes. With deadly hatred I hated it.

I got to feeling very badly treated. What did my father suppose such commonplace discomforts were going to do for *me?* What part had a summer like this in the life and work that were to be mine? I lost that comfortable little feeling of advantage over life. I mislaid my consciousness of the silver spoon. In about three weeks it seemed as if I 'd always taught summer-school at Jericho, and might have to keep on.

Oh, well! — I was hot and sore. Everybody has been hot and sore some time or other, I suppose. The minute description can be omitted. But I don't know whether everybody with a grievance gets so badly twisted up in it as I do.

These emotions reached their climax one muggy, sultry July day as I plodded, moist and unhappy, back from the schoolhouse. I wiped my forehead, gritted my teeth, and vowed I would not stand the whole situation another

twenty-four hours. I'd resign my position, wire dad, and take a train for somewhere out West in the mountains. If I had to make good on my own hook in three months, I'd at least do it in a cool place, at work of my selecting. The challenged party ought to have the choice of weapons.

My room was intolerably stuffy, so I came downstairs reluctantly and sat on the front steps. There was a wide outlook, for the house stood on a ridge of land that broke the flat prairie like a great welt. Old Miles was there, watching a heavy cloud-bank off in the southwest. Those clouds had been fooling around every evening for a week, but nothing ever came of it. The longer the drought, the harder it is to break.

I made some caustic remark about the weather as I sat down. Probably I looked cross enough to bite the poker.

Miles looked at me and then looked away quickly, as if it really was not decent to be observing a fellow in such a rage. I knew the look, for I've felt that way myself about other men.

'Yes, bad weather,' he said. 'When it gets too hot and dry for corn, it's too hot and dry for folks. And then — it always rains. It'll rain to-night. You wait and see.'

I mumbled something disparaging to the universe.

'Richard!' said Mr. Miles suddenly and strongly, 'I know what ails you. It ain't the weather, it's your teaching. You 're discouraged because you can't make 'em sense things. But it ain't time yet for you to get discouraged. I hate to see it, for it ain't necessary.'

This made me feel a little ashamed of myself.

'Did you ever teach, Mr. Miles?' I asked, for the sake of seeming civil.

'Yes, I did. So I know there 's a secret to teachin' you prob'ly ain't got yet. I dunno as I could help you to it. It ain't likely. An' yet —'

Unlikely indeed! I thought. Aloud, I said politely, 'I 'd be glad to hear your views.'

'I know what you feel!' he said with extraordinary energy. 'My Lord! Don't I know what you feel? You want to make 'em sense things as you sense 'em. You want to make 'em work as you can work. You won't be satisfied until you've given 'em the thirst to know and the means of knowing. Yes, I know what you feel!'

I stared at him, dumbfounded. I knew what I felt, too, but it was n't much like this.

'There are pictures in your brain that you must show 'em. There 's a universe to cram inside their heads. God has been workin' for a billion years at doing things — and just one little life to learn about 'em in! To feel you're on His trail, a-following fast, and got to pass the feeling on — I guess there's no wine on earth so heady, is there, boy?'

I could n't pretend I did n't understand him. I have had it too — that wonderful sensation we pack away into two dry words and label 'intellectual stimulus.' But it had n't come to me that I could, or should, pass it on. I thought it was an emotion designed for my private encouragement and delight. And what was old Seth Miles doing with intellectual stimulus? I would as soon expect to unearth a case of champagne in his cellar. But, however he got it, undeniably it was the real thing.

A dozen questions rushed to my tongue, but I held them back, for he was looking me up and down with a wistful tenderness that seemed to prelude further revelation.

'I 'm going to tell you the whole story now,' he said with an effort. 'I promised your father I would. He told me to. And I'd better get it over. Mebbe there's something in it for you — and mebbe not. But here it is.'

II

'I 've lived right here since I was a little shaver. My father cleared this land on the Ridge, and as I grew up, I helped him. We were a small family for those days. I was the only boy. There was one sister, Sarah, who keeps house for me now — and Cynthy. Cynthy was an orphan my folks took to raise for company to Sarah. My father was her guardeen and she had two thousand dollars, so it was n't charity, you understand. She was the prettiest child, an' the gentlest, I ever see, with her big brown eyes, her curly bronze hair, an' her friendly little ways. I made it my business to look after Cynthy, the way a bigger boy will, from the time she come to us. Sometimes Sarah, being larger an' self-willed, would pick on her a little — an' then I'd put Sarah in her place mighty sudden. P'raps Cynthy was my romance, for she was a little finer stuff than we were. But I was n't a sentimental boy. Quite the other way. Mostly I was counted a handful. You ain't got anybody in your school as hard to handle as I was when I was a cub.

'When I went to school, I went for the fun of it, and to torment the teacher. I had n't another thought in my head. If I did n't get a lickin' once a week, I thought I was neglected. When I was sixteen, I 'd been through Dayboll's Arithmetic, and I could read and spell a little for my own use, but my spelling was n't much good to anybody else. That was all I knew and all I wanted to know. You see, the little I learned was all plastered on the outside, so to speak. It had n't called to anything inside me then.

'One fall there come a new teacher to our school, a young fellow earnin' money to get through college. He got on the right side of me somehow. I can't tell how he

did it, because I don't know. But first he set me studying and then he set me thinking. And I began to work at books *from the inside.* They were n't tasks any more. He made me feel like I had a mind and could use it, just like I knew I had strong muscles and could use them. Seemed 's if when I once got started, I could n't stop. I got up mornings to study. I studied nights an' I studied Sundays. There could n't nothing stop me. I thought I 'd found the biggest thing on earth when I found out how to make my mind work! Jerusalem! Those were days! I was happy then! Sometimes I wonder what the Lord 's got saved up for us in the next world as good as that tasted in this.'

He stopped, threw back his head and drew in a long, ecstatic breath, as though he would taste again the sharp, sweet flavor of that draught.

'I studied like that for nigh two years. Then a new idea struck me. It was one spring day. I remember father and I was ploughing for corn. I said, "Father, if I could get a school, I guess I could teach." He had n't no more idea I could teach than that I could go to Congress, not a bit; but I finally drilled it into him I was in earnest, and that fall he helped me get a school near home.

'I never did any work as hard as that. It was against me that I was so near home, and everybody knew I'd never studied until just lately. I could tell you stories from now till bedtime about the times I had with the big boys and girls. But I never let go my main idea for a minute — that it was n't just so much grammar and 'rithmetic I was tryin' to cram into them, but that I had to show 'em how to sense it all. By and by, one after another found out what I was after. The bright ones took to it like ducks to water. It was just wonderful the work they 'd do for me, once they understood.

'A notion took shape in my head. For all I could see, the

things to learn were endless. They stretched ahead of me like a sun-path on the water. I thought, "Mebbe I can go on learning all my days. Mebbe I can teach as I learn, so young folks will say of me as I said of my teacher, *He showed me how to sense things for myself.*" That notion seemed wonderful good to me! It grew stronger an' stronger. It seemed as if I 'd fit into such a life the way a key fits in its lock. And I could n't see no reason why I should n't put it through.

'So I spoke to father. He did n't say much, but I noticed he did n't seem keen about it. He 'd bought the store at the Corners two years before, and it seemed to me it would work out pretty well if he sold the farm and just tended store and had a little house in Garibaldi, as he and mother got along in years.

'I thought likely Sarah would marry, and anybody might be sure Cynthy would. She an' Sarah had had two years' schooling in Oatesville by this time, and they held themselves a bit high. Cynthy was grown up that pretty and dainty you caught your breath when you looked at her. There 's some young girls have that dazzling kind of a look. When you lay eyes on them, it hardly seems as if it could be *true* they looked like that. Cynthy was one of that kind.

'My plans took shape in my mind the second winter I taught. I set my heart on teaching one more year and then going to school somewhere myself. I got the State University catalogue and began to plan the studying I did nights so it would help me enter.

'It was just then that I ran against the proposition of teaching Greek. A boy from York State come out to spend the winter with an uncle whose farm joined ours. He 'd lost his father, and I guess his mother did n't know what to do with him. I don't mean Dick was n't a good boy, but likely he was a handful for a woman.

'Living so near, we saw a lot of him. He was always coming in evenings to see the girls, and he pretended to go to school, too. He was sort of uppish in his ways, and I knew he made fun of me and my teaching, all around among the neighbors. What did he do one day but bring me some beginning Greek exercises to look over, with his head in the air as if he was sayin', "Guess I 've got you now!"

'I took his exercises and looked at 'em, awful wise, and said those was all right, that time. Bless you, I did n't know Alphy from Omegy, but I meant to, mighty quick! I walked seven miles an' back that evening to borrow some Greek books of a man I knew had 'em, and sat up till two o'clock, tryin' to get the hang of the alphabet.

'Well, sir! I just pitched into those books an' tore the innards out of 'em, and then I pitched into that fellow. You 'd ought to have seen him open his eyes when he found I knew what I was talkin' about! He got tired of his Greek inside of two weeks. But I held him to it. I made him keep right on, and I did the same, and kept ahead of him.

'It interested me awfully, that Greek. I borrowed some more books and got me some translations. I don't say I got so I could read it easy, but I got on to a lot of new ideas. There was one book about a fellow who was strapped to a rock for a thousand years for bringing the fire of the gods to mortals. Probably you 've heard of it. I liked that.'

All this sounded to me a good deal like a fairy-tale the old gentleman was telling. Of course, all education is so much more rigid nowadays, that the idea of anybody pitching in that way, and grabbing the heart out of any form of knowledge was novel to me. Yet I 'd read in the biographies of great men that such things had really been done. Only — Mr. Miles was n't a great man. How, then,

had he come to accomplish what I understood was essentially an achievement of genius? The thing staggered me.

'"Prometheus Bound,"' said Seth Miles meditatively. 'That's the one. You may think I was conceited, but it seemed to me I knew how that man felt. To make them look up! To kindle the flame! Did n't I know how a man could long to do that? Would n't I, too, risk the anger of the gods if I could fire those children's minds the way my own was fired?

'You see, it's this way, Richard: a feeling is a feeling. There are only just so many of 'em in the world, and if you know what any one of 'em is like, you do. That's all.

'When I spoke to father about my plans again, he looked as if I'd hurt him. A pitiful, caught look came in his eyes, and he said, "Don't let's talk about it now, Seth. I — I reelly ain 't up to it to-day."

'There was something in what he said, or the way he said it, that just seemed to hit my heart a smashing blow. I felt like I'd swallowed a pound of shot, and yet I did n't know why. I could n't see anything wrong, nor any reason why my plans was n't for the best, for all of us. But those few words he said, and the way he looked, upset me so that I went off to the barn after school that afternoon and climbed into the hay-mow to find a quiet place to figure the thing out. I had n't been there long before I heard voices down below, and Cynthy's laugh, and somebody climbing the ladder. It was Cynthy and Dick. Sarah had sent 'em out to hunt more eggs for a cake she was bakin'.

'I did n't think they 'd stay long, and I wanted to be let alone, so I just kept quiet.

'Now I want to say before I go any further that Dick would have been a great deal more no-account than he was if he had n't admired Cynthy, and it was n't any wonder she liked him. Besides what there was to him, there was

plenty of little reasons, like the kind of neckties he wore and the way he kept his shoes shined. There was always a kind of style about Dick.

'They rustled round, laughing and talking, till they got the five eggs they was sent for, and then Cynthy made as if she started down the ladder. Dick held her back.

'"Not till you've kissed me!" said he.

'"I'm ashamed of you," said she.

'"I'm proud of myself," said he, "to think I know enough to want it. Why, Cynthy, I ain't never had one, but I'd swear a kiss of yours would be like the flutter of an angel's wing across my lips."

'"That's foolishness," said she; but she said it softly, as if she liked foolishness.

'Mebbe you wonder how I remember every little thing they said. It's like it was burned into my brain with fire. For I no sooner heard 'em foolin' with one another that soft little way than something seemed to wring my heart with such a twist that it stopped beating. — Dick kiss Cynthy? Why — why, Cynthy was mine! She 'd always been as close to me as the beat of my own heart. From the minute I first laid eyes on her I'd known it, in the back of my mind. I'd never put it into words, not even to myself. But that was the way it *was*. So now my soul just staggered. Nobody could kiss Cynthy but me. That was all.

'"Foolishness!" said Dick; his voice was sort of thick and blurry, and, of a sudden, I could hear him breathing hard. "Foolishness! I guess it's the only wisdom that there is! — My God! — My God! — *O Cynthy, just one kiss!*"

'"Dick! Why, Dick!"

'Her little voice sounded like the birds you sometimes hear in the middle of the night, just that soft, astonished, questioning note.

'I suppose I was across that mow and beside 'em in five seconds, but it seemed to me I took an hour to cross it. I never traveled so long and hard a road, nor one so beset with terror and despair.

'They turned and faced me as I came. Dick's face was red, and in his eyes was agony — no less. Cynthy was very white, her little head held high on her slender neck. Her eyes was brave and clear. Mebbe I was excited, but it seemed to me that she was shinin' from head to foot. You see, to her it was so wonderful.

'We stood there silent for a long minute, lookin' clean into one another's souls. Dick's eyes and mine met and wrestled. I never fought a fight like that, — without a word nor a blow, — and yet we were fighting for more than our lives.

'His eyes did n't fall. He did n't look shamefaced. Oh, he too had pluck!

'As my brain cleared of the queer mist, that cry of his seemed to sound pitifully in my ears.

'"*O Cynthy, just one kiss!*"

'I don't suppose there's a man on earth that ain't said that from once to fifty times, just as much in earnest as Dick, and just as little thinkin' them words are the key in the Door — the door that gives on the road runnin' down to Hell or up to Heaven. You've got to move one way or the other if you open that door. It ain't a road to linger on. Love marches.

'That was the way it come to me then. For most men, love marches. — But me. How about me? The love that come to me had been silent and patient. It 'd sat in my heart like a bird on its nest. Was I different from other men? Did I ask less, give more? I was just a boy — how was I to know?

'It was Cynthy broke the tension. She was always a bit

of a mischief. Suddenly she smiled an' dimpled like the sun comin' out from a cloud. She caught Dick's finger-tips quick an' brushed 'em across her lips.

'"Well, Seth!" she says to me, cheerful and confident again.

'"Is he your choice, Cynthy?" said I. "Dare you leave us — *all* of us — an' go to him forever?" I asked her, steadying my voice.

'She looked a little hurt and a little puzzled.

'"Has it come to that?" she asked me.

'"Mebbe it has n't with you," I answered, "but it has with Dick — an' with me, Cynthy."

'She looked at me as if she did n't know what I meant, and then the color rushed up into her face in a glorious flood.

'"Not — not you too, Seth?" she cried. "Oh — not you too!"

'"Yes, Cynthy, — now and always."

'She looked from me to Dick an' back to me again. In her face I saw she was uncertain.

'"Why did n't you tell me before?" she cried out sharply. "Why did n't — *you* — teach me? O Seth, he needs me most!"

'Dick's eyes and mine met and clashed again like steel on steel. But it was mine that fell at last.

'We all went back to the house together without saying any more.

'It come to me just like this. Dick was tangled in his feelings, and the feelings are the strongest cords that ever bind a boy like him. Cynthy was drawn to him, because to her Dick was a thing of splendor and it was so wonderful he needed her! I need n't tell you what it was tied me. I still had a fighting chance to get her away from him, but was it fair of me to make the fight?

'Every drop of blood in my body said, Yes! Every cell in my brain said, No! For, you see, life had us in a net — but I was the strong one and *I could break the net.*

'I went off and walked by myself. Sundown come, and milking-time, and supper. But I forgot to eat or work. I walked.

'No man can tell you what he thinks and feels in hours like them. There ain't no words for the awful hopes or the black despairs or the gleams that begin like lightning-flashes and grow to something like the breaking dawn. I could n't get away from it anyhow I turned. It was n't a situation I *dared* leave alone, not with Dick at white heat and Cynthy so confident of herself and so pitiful. It was n't safe to let things be. I must snatch her from him or give her to him. — It was my turn now to cry out, *O my God!*

' 'T was long after dark when I come back. My mind was made up. They should have each other. I 'd do what I could to make the thing easy. "After all," I told myself, "you ain't completely stripped. Don't think it! You have the other thing. You can carry the torch. You can bring down the flame. Folks will thank you yet for the sacred fire!"

'I laid that thought to my heart like something cool and comforting. And it helped me to come through.

'When I got back to the house, it was late and everybody was abed but my father. He was sitting right here where we are, waiting up for me. There was a moon, some past the full, rising yonder. I sat down on the step below him and put it to him straight.

'"Father," said I, "Dick 's in love with Cynthy. She's eighteen an' he 's twenty. I judge we 'd better help 'em marry."

'He give a heartbroken kind of groan. "Don't I know

she 's eighteen?" he said. "Ain't it worryin' the life right out of me?"

'"Whatever do you mean?" I asked pretty sharp, for I sensed bad trouble in his very voice.

'"It 's her two thousand dollars," he said. "She 's due to have it. If she marries, she 's got to have it right away. And I ain't got it to give her, that 's all!"

'"Where is it? What 's become of it?"

'"I bought the store at the Crossroads with it, and give her my note. But I had n't no business to do it that way. And the store ain't done well, and the farm ain't done well. The summer 's been so cold and wet, corn ain't more 'n a third of a crop, and I put in mainly corn this year. I can't sell the store. I dunno 's I can mortgage the farm. I dunno what *to* do. If you leave home like you talk of, I shall go under. Somebody 's got to take hold an' help me. I can't carry my load no longer."

'So — there was that! And I had to face it alone.

'I did n't despair over the money part of it, like father did. I knew he 'd neglected the farm for the store, and the store for the farm. If I 'd been with him either place, instead of teaching, things would have gone on all right. I thought Dick could have his choice of the store or a part of the land to clear up the debt to Cynthy. But, whichever he took, father 'd need me to help out. I could see he was beginning to break. And Dick would need me too, till he got broke in to work and earnin'. So — now it was me that life had in the net, and there was no way I could break out.

'Father went off to bed a good deal happier after I told him I 'd stand by. He even chippered up so he said this: "You 're all right, Seth, and teachin' 's all right. But I 've thought it all over and I 've come to the conclusion that teachin' and studyin' 's like hard cider. It goes to your head and makes you feel good, but after all, there ain't

nothing nourishing about it. I 'd like to see you make some money."

'I sat on those steps the rest of the night, I guess, while that waning moon climbed up the sky and then dropped down again. 'T ain't often a man is called on to fight two such fights in a single day. I ain't been able to look at a moon past the full since that night.

'And yet — toward morning there come peace. I saw it this way at last. To help is bigger yet than to teach. If Prometheus could be chained to that rock a thousand years while the vultures tore his vitals just so that men might *know*, could n't I bear the beaks an' the claws a little lifetime so that father and Cynthy and Dick might *live?* I thought I could — an' I have.'

Mr. Miles stopped short. Something gripped my throat. I shall never see again such a luminous look as I caught on his face when he turned it toward the darkening west. The black clouds had rolled up rapidly while we were talking and, if you 'll believe me, when he had finished, it thundered on the right!

'Is — is that all?' I said chokily.

'Cynthy 's had a happy life,' he said. 'Dick made good in the store, and he 's made good out yonder in the world. Dick has gone very far. And as for me, there 's only one thing more I want in this world. If — if I could see her boy and his pick up the torch I dropped, and carry on that sacred fire —'

It was mighty queer, but I found I was shaking all over with an excitement I hardly understood. Something that had been hovering in the air while he talked came closer and suddenly showed me its face.

'But,' I said thick and fast, 'but — why, *mother's* name is Cynthia!'

'Yes, Richard.'

'And father — *father* —?'

'Yes, Richard.'

It was my turn to feel something squeeze my heart as in two hands. I 'll never tell you how I felt! For I saw a thousand things at once. I saw what dad meant by my touching life. And I saw the meaning of the path I had chosen blindly. Before me, like a map, were spread their lives and mine, to-day and yesterday. I shook with the passions that had created me. I vibrated with the sacrifices that had gone to make me possible. For the first time in all my days I got a glimpse of what the young generation means to the elder. On my head had descended all their hopes. I was the laden ship that carried their great desires. Mine to lift the torch for all of them — and thank God for the chance!

I struck my tears away and reached out blindly to grasp Seth Miles's bony hand. I guess he knew I meant it.

BURIED TREASURE

BY MAZO DE LA ROCHE

I

It was Saturday morning, and we three were together in Mrs. Handsomebody's parlor — Angel, and The Seraph, and I.

No sooner had the front door closed upon the tall, angular figure of that lady, bearing her market basket, than we shut our books with a snap, ran on tiptoe to the top of the stairs, and, after a moment's breathless listening, cast our young forms on the smooth walnut banister, and glided gloriously to the bottom.

Regularly on a Saturday morning Mrs. Handsomebody went to market, and with equal regularity we, her pupils, instantly cast off the yoke of her restraint, slid down the banisters, and entered the forbidden precincts of the Parlor.

On other week-days the shutters of this grim apartment were kept closed, and an inquisitive eye, applied to the keyhole, could just faintly discern the portrait in crayon of the late Mr. Handsomebody, presiding, like some whiskered ghost, over the revels of the stuffed birds in the glass case below him.

But on a Saturday morning Mary Ellen swept and dusted there. The shutters were thrown open, and the thin-legged piano and the haircloth furniture were furbished up for the morrow.

Moreover, Mary Ellen liked our company. She had a spooky feeling about the parlor. Mr. Handsomebody gave her the creeps, she said; and once when she had turned her

back she had heard one of the stuffed birds twitter. It was a gruesome thought.

When we bounded in on her, Mary Ellen was dragging the broom feebly across the gigantic green-and-red lilies of the carpet, her bare red arms moving like listless antennæ. She could, when she willed, work vigorously and well; but no one knew when a heavy mood might seize her, and render her as useless as was compatible with retaining her situation.

'Och, byes!' she groaned, leaning on her broom. 'This spring weather do be makin' me as wake as a blind kitten! Sure, I feel this mornin' like as if I 'd a stone settin' on my stomach, an' me head feels as light as thistledown. I wisht the missus 'd fergit to come home an' I could take a day off — but there 's no such luck for Mary Ellen!'

She made a few more passes with her broom and then sighed.

'I think I 'll soon be leavin' this place,' she said.

A vision of the house without the cheering presence of Mary Ellen rose blackly before us. We crowded round her.

'Now, see here,' said Angel masterfully, putting his arms about her stout waist. 'You know perfectly well that father 's coming back from South America soon to make a home for us, and that you are to come and be our cook, and make apple-dumplings, and have all the followers you like.'

Now Angel knew whereof he spoke, for Mary Ellen's 'followers' were a bone of contention between her and her mistress.

'Aw, Master Angel,' she expostulated, 'what a tongue ye have in yer head to be sure! Followers, is it? Sure, they 're the bane o' me life! Now git out o' the way o' the dust, all of yez, or I 'll put a tin ear on ye!' And she began to swing her broom vigorously.

We ran to the window and looked out; but no sooner had we looked out than we whistled with astonishment at what we saw.

But first, I must tell you that the street on which we lived ran east and west. On the corner to the west of Mrs. Handsomebody's house was the gray old cathedral; next to it was the Bishop's house, of gray stone also; then a pair of dingy, white brick houses exactly alike. In one of these we lived with Mrs. Handsomebody, and the other was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Pegg and their three servants.

To us they seemed very elegant, if somewhat uninteresting people. Mrs. Mortimer Pegg frequently had carriage callers, and not seldom sallied forth herself in a sedate victoria from the livery stables. But beyond an occasional flutter of excitement when their horses stopped at our very gate, there was little in this prim couple to interest us. So neat and precise were they as they tripped down the street together, that we called them (out of Mrs. Handsomebody's hearing) Mr. and Mrs. 'Cribbage Pegg.'

Now, on this morning in early spring when we looked out of the window, our eyes discovered an object of such compelling interest in the Peggs' front garden that we rubbed them again to make sure that we were broad awake.

Striding up and down the small enclosure was a tall old man wearing a brilliant-hued, flowered dressing-gown that hung open at the neck, disclosing his long brown throat and hairy chest, and flapped negligently about his heels as he strode.

He had bushy iron-gray hair and moustache, and tufts of curly gray beard grew around his chin and ears. His nose was large and sunburned; and every now and again he would stop in his caged-animal walk and sniff the air as though he liked it.

I liked the old gentleman from the start.

'Oo-o! See the funny old man!' giggled The Seraph. 'Coat like Jacob an' his bwethern!'

Angel and I plied Mary Ellen with questions. Who was he? Did he live with the Peggs? Did she think he was a foreigner?

Mary Ellen, supported by her broom, stared out of the window.

'For th' love of Hiven!' she ejaculated. 'If that ain't a sight now! Byes, it 's Mr. Pegg's own father come home from somewheres in th' Indies. Their cook was tellin' me of the time they have wid him. He 's a bit light-headed, y' see, an' has all his meals in his own room — th' quarest dishes iver — an' a starlin' for a pet, mind ye!'

At that moment the old gentleman perceived that he was watched, and saluting Mary Ellen gallantly, he called out, —

'Good morning, madam!'

Mary Ellen, covered with confusion, drew back behind the curtain. I was about to make a suitable reply when I saw Mrs. Mortimer Pegg, herself, emerge from her house with a very red face, and resolutely grasp her father-in-law's arm. She spoke to him in a rapid undertone, and, after a moment's hesitation, he followed her meekly into the house.

How I sympathized with him! I knew only too well the humiliation experienced by the helpless male when overbearing woman drags him ignominiously from his harmless recreation. A bond of understanding seemed to be established between us at once.

The voice of Mary Ellen broke in on my reverie. She was teasing Angel to sing.

'Aw, give us a chune, Master Angel, before th' missus gets back! There 's a duck! I 'll give ye a pocketful of raisins as sure 's fate!'

Angel was the possessor of a flute-like treble, and he could strum some sort of accompaniment on the piano to any song. It was Mary Ellen's delight on a Saturday morning to pour forth her pent-up feelings in one of the popular songs, with Angel to keep her on the tune and thump a chord or two.

It was a risky business. But The Seraph mounted guard at the window while I pressed my nose against the glass case which held the stuffed birds, and wondered if by chance any of them had come from South America where father was.

Tum-te-tum-te-tum, strummed Angel.

'Casey would waltz with the strawberry blonde,
And the — band — played — on.'

His sweet reedy tones thrilled the April air.

And Mary Ellen's voice, robust as the whistle of a locomotive, bursting with health and spirits, shook the very cobwebs that she had not swept down.

'Casey would waltz wid th' strawberry blonde,
And — the — band — play — don!'

Generally we had a faithful subordinate in The Seraph. He had a rather sturdy sense of honor. On this spring morning, however, I think that the singing of Mary Ellen must have dulled his sensibilities, for, instead of keeping a bright lookout up the street for the dreaded form of Mrs. Handsomebody, he lolled across the window-sill, dangling a piece of string, with the April sunshine warming his rounded back.

And as he dangled the string, Mrs. Handsomebody drew nearer and nearer. She entered the gate — she entered the house — she was in the parlor!

Angel and Mary Ellen had just given their last triumphant shout, when Mrs. Handsomebody said in a voice of cold fury, —

'Mary Ellen, kindly cease that ribald screaming. David [David is Angel's proper name], get up instantly from that piano stool and face me! John, Alexander, face me!'

We did so tremblingly.

'Now,' said Mrs. Handsomebody, 'you three boys go up to your bedroom — not to the schoolroom, mind — and don't let me hear another sound from you to-day! You shall get no dinner. At four I will come and discuss your disgraceful conduct with you. Now march!'

She held the door open for us while we filed sheepishly under her arm. Then the door closed behind us with a decisive bang, and poor Mary Ellen was left in the torture-chamber with Mrs. Handsomebody and the stuffed birds.

II

Angel and I scurried up the stairway. We could hear The Seraph panting as he labored after us.

Once in the haven of our little room, we rolled in a confused heap on the bed, scuffling indiscriminately. Such a punishment was not new to us. It was a favorite one with Mrs. Handsomebody, and we had a suspicion that she relished the fact that so much food was saved when we went dinnerless. At any rate, we were not allowed to make up the deficiency at tea-time.

We always passed the hours of our confinement on the bed, for the room was very small and the one window stared blankly at the window of an unused room in the Peggs' house, which blankly returned the stare.

But these were not dull times for us. As Elizabethan actors, striding about their bare stage, conjured up brave pictures of gilded halls or leafy forest glades, so we little fellows made a castle stronghold of our bed; or better still, a gallant frigate that sailed beyond the barren walls

into unknown seas of adventure, and anchored at last off some rocky island where treasure lay hidden among the hills.

What brave fights with pirates there were, when Angel as captain, I as mate, with The Seraph for a cabin-boy, fought the bloody pirate gangs on those surf-washed shores, and gained the fight, though far outnumbered!

They were not dull times in that small back room, but gay-colored, lawless times, when our fancy was let free, and we fought on empty stomachs, and felt only the wind in our faces, and heard the creak of straining cordage. What if we were on half-rations!

On this particular morning, however, there was something to be disposed of before we got to business: to wit, the rank insubordination of The Seraph. It was not to be dealt with too lightly. Angel sat up with a disheveled head.

'Get up!' he commanded The Seraph, who obeyed wonderingly.

'Now, my man,' continued Angel, with the scowl that had made him dreaded the South Seas over, 'have you anything to say for yourself?'

The Seraph hung his head.

'I was on'y danglin' a bit o' stwing,' he murmured.

'String!' repeated Angel, the scowl deepening; 'dangling a bit of string! You may be dangling yourself at the end of a rope before the sun sets, my hearty! Here we are without any dinner, all along of you. Now see here, you 'll go right over into that corner by the window with your face to the wall and stand there all the time John and I play! An' — an' you won't know what we 're doing nor where we 're going nor *anything* — so there!'

The Seraph went, weeping bitterly. He hid his face in the dusty lace window-curtain. He looked very small. I

could not help remembering how father had said we were to take care of him and not make him cry.

Somehow that morning things went ill with the adventure. The savor had gone out of our play. Two were but a paltry company after all. Where was the cabin-boy with his trusty dirk, eager to bleed for the cause? Though we kept our backs rigorously turned to the window, and spoke only in whispers, neither of us was quite able to forget the presence of that dejected little figure.

After a bit The Seraph's whimpering ceased, and what was our surprise to hear the chuckling laugh with which he was wont to signify his pleasure!

We turned to look at him. His face was pressed to the window, and again he giggled rapturously.

'What 's up, kid?' we demanded.

'Ole Joseph-an'-his-bwethern,' he sputtered, 'winkin' an' wavin' hands wiv me!'

We were at his side like a shot, and there, in the hitherto blank window of the Peggs' house, stood the old gentleman of the flowered dressing-gown, laughing and nodding at The Seraph. When he saw us he made a sign to us to open our window, and at the same instant raised his own.

It took the three of us to accomplish it, for the window moved unreadily, being seldom raised, as Mrs. Handsomebody regarded fresh air much as she regarded a small boy, as something to be kept in its place.

At last the window rose, protesting and creaking, and the next moment we were face to face with our new acquaintance.

'Hello!' he said, in a loud, jovial voice.

'Hello!' said we; and stared.

He had a strong, weather-beaten face, and wide-open, light eyes, blue and wild as the sea

'Hello, boy!' he repeated, looking at Angel. 'What 's your name?'

Now Angel was shy with strangers, so I usually answered questions.

'His name,' I replied then, 'is David Curzon; but mother called him Angel, so we jus' keep on doing it.'

'Oh,' said the old gentleman. Then he fixed The Seraph with his eye. 'What 's the bantling's name?'

The Seraph, mightily confused at being called a bantling, giggled inanely, so I replied again.

'His name is Alexander Curzon, but mother called him The Seraph, so we jus' keep on doing it too.'

'Um-hm,' assented the old gentleman; 'and you — what 's your name?'

'John,' I replied.

'Oh,' he said, with an odd little smile, 'and what do they keep on calling *you?*'

'Just John,' I answered firmly, 'nothing else.'

'Who 's your father?' came the next question.

'He 's David Curzon, senior,' I said proudly, 'and he 's in South America building a railroad, an' Mrs. Handsomebody used to be his governess when he was a little boy, so he left us with her; but some day, pretty soon, I think, he 's coming back to make a really home for us with rabbits an' puppies an' pigeons an' things.'

Our new friend nodded sympathetically. Then, quite suddenly, he asked, —

'Where 's your mother?'

'She 's in heaven,' I answered simply. 'She went there two years ago.'

'Yes,' broke in The Seraph eagerly, 'but she 's comin' back some day to make a *weally* home for us.'

'Shut up!' said Angel gruffly, poking him with his elbow.

'The Seraph 's very little,' I explained apologetically; 'he does n't understand.'

The old gentleman put his hand in the pocket of his dressing-gown.

'Bantling,' he said with his droll smile, 'do you like peppermint bull's-eyes?'

'Yes,' said The Seraph, 'I like them — one for each of us.'

Whereupon this extraordinary man began throwing us peppermints as fast as we could catch them. It was surprising how we began to feel at home with him, as though we had known him for years.

He had traveled all over the world, it seemed, and he brought many curious things to the window to show us. One of these was a starling, whose wicker cage he placed on the sill where the sunlight fell.

He had got the bird, he said, from one of the crew of a trading vessel off the coast of Java. The sailor had brought it all the way from Devon for company; and he added, 'The brute had put out both its eyes so that it would learn to talk more readily; so now, you see, the poor little fellow is quite blind.'

'Blind — blind — blind!' echoed the starling briskly, — 'blind — blind — blind!'

He took it from its cage on his finger. It hopped up his arm till it reached his cheek, and there it began to peck at his whiskers, crying all the while in its shrill, lonely tones, 'Blind — blind — blind!'

We three were entranced; and an idea that was swiftly forming in my mind struggled for expression.

If this wonderful old man had, as he said, sailed the seas from Land's End to Ceylon, was it not possible that he had seen, even fought with, real pirates? Might he not have followed hot on the trail of hidden treasure? My cheeks burned as I tried to put the question.

'Did you,' I began, — 'did you —'

'Well?' he encouraged. 'Did I what, John?'

'Oh, did you,' I burst out, 'ever see a pirate ship, an' pirates — real ones?'

His face lit up.

'Surely,' he replied casually, 'many an one.'

'Praps,' ventured Angel, with an excited laugh, 'praps you 're one yourself!'

The old gentleman searched our eager faces with his wide-open, sea-blue eyes; then he looked cautiously into the room behind him, and, being apparently satisfied that no one could overhear, he put his hand to the side of his mouth, and said in a loud, hoarse whisper, —

'That I am. Pirate as ever was!'

I think you could have knocked me down with a feather. I know my knees shook and the room reeled. The Seraph was the first to recover, piping cheerfully, —

'I yike piwates!'

'Yes,' repeated the old gentleman, reflectively, 'pirate as ever was. The things I 've seen and done would fill the biggest book you ever saw, and it 'd make your hair stand on end to read it — what with fights, and murders, and hangings, and storms, and shipwreck, and the hunt for gold! Many a sweet schooner or frigate I 've sunk, or taken for myself, and there is n't a port on the South Seas where women don't hush their children's crying with the fear of Captain Pegg!'

Then he added hastily, as though he feared he had gone too far, —

'But I 'm a changed man, mark you — a reformed man. If things suit me pretty well here, I don't think I shall break out again. It is just that you chaps seem so sympathetic, makes me tell you all this; but you must swear never to breathe a word of it, for no one knows but you.

My son and daughter-in-law think I 'm an archæologist. It 'd be an awful shock to them to find that I 'm a pirate.'

We swore the blackest secrecy, and were about to ply him with a hundred questions, when we saw a maid carrying a large tray enter the room behind him.

Captain Pegg, as I must now call him, gave us a gesture of warning and began to lower his window. A pleasant aroma of roast beef came across the alley. The next instant the flowered dressing-gown had disappeared and the window opposite stared blankly as before.

Angel drew a deep breath. 'Did you notice,' he said, 'how different he got once he had told us he was a pirate — wilder and rougher, and used more sailor words?'

'However did you guess it first?' I asked admiringly.

'I think I know a pirate when I see one,' he returned loftily. 'But oh, I say, would n't Mrs. Handsomebody be waxy if she knew?'

'An' would n't Mary Ellen be scared stiff if *she* knew?'

'An' won't we have fun? Hurray!'

We rolled in ecstasy on the much-enduring bed.

We talked excitedly of the possibilities of such a wonderful and dangerous friendship. And as it turned out, none of our imaginings equaled what really happened.

The afternoon passed quickly. As the hands of our alarm clock neared the hour of four we obliterated the traces of our sojourn on the bed as well as we could; and when Mrs. Handsomebody entered, she found us sitting in a row in the three cane-bottomed chairs on which we hung our clothes at night.

The scolding she gave us was even longer and more humiliating to our manhood than usual. She shook her hard white finger near our faces, and said that for very little she would write to our father and complain of our actions.

'Now,' she said, in conclusion, 'give your faces and hands a thorough washing, and comb your hair, which is disgraceful; then come quietly down to tea.'

The door closed behind her.

'What beats me,' said Angel, lathering his hands, 'is why that one white hair on her chin wiggles so when she jaws us. I can't keep my eyes off it.'

'It wiggles,' piped The Seraph, as he dragged a brush over his curls, ''cos it 's nervous, an' I wiggle when she scolds, too, 'cos *I 'm* nervous.'

'Don't you worry, old man,' Angel responded gayly, 'we 'll take care of you.'

We were in fine spirits despite our scolding. Indeed, we almost pitied Mrs. Handsomebody for her ignorance of the wonders among which she had her being.

Here she was, fussing over some stuffed birds in a glass case, when a live starling, who could talk, had perched near her very window-sill! She spent hours in conversation with her Unitarian minister, while a real pirate lived next door!

It was pitiful, and yet it was very funny. We found it hard to go quietly down to tea with such thoughts in our minds, and after five hours in our bedroom.

III

The next day was Sunday.

As we sat at dinner with Mrs. Handsomebody after Morning Service, we were scarcely conscious of the large white dumplings, that bulged before us, with a delicious sticky, sweet sauce trickling down their dropsical sides. We plied our spoons with languid interest around their outer edges, as calves nibble around a straw stack. Our vagrant minds scoured the Spanish Main with Captain Pegg.

Suddenly The Seraph spoke in that cocksure way of his.

'There 's a piwate at Pegg's.'

Mrs. Handsomebody looked at him sharply.

'What 's that?' she demanded.

At the same instant Angel and I kicked him under cover of the dining-table.

'What did you say?' repeated Mrs. Handsomebody, sternly.

'Funny ole gennelman at the Cwibbage Peggs',' replied The Seraph with his mouth full.

Mrs. Handsomebody greatly respected Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Pegg, and this play of words on the name incensed her.

'Am I to understand, Alexander,' she gobbled, 'that you are making *game* of the Mortimer Peggs?'

'Yes,' giggled the wretched Seraph, 'it 's a cwibbage game. You play it wiv Peggs.'

'Leave the table instantly!' ordered Mrs. Handsomebody. 'You are becoming unbearable.'

The Seraph cast one anguished look at his dumpling and burst into tears. We could hear his wails growing ever fainter as he plodded up the stairs.

'Mary Ellen, remove that dumpling!' commanded Mrs. Handsomebody.

Angel and I began to eat very fast. There was a short silence; then Mrs. Handsomebody said didactically, —

'The elder Mr. Pegg is a much traveled gentleman, and one of the most noted archæologists of the day. A trifle eccentric in his manner, perhaps, but a deep thinker. David, can you tell me what an archæologist is?'

'Something you pretend you are,' said Angel, 'and you ain't.'

'Nonsense!' snapped Mrs. Handsomebody. 'Look it up in your Johnson's when you go upstairs, and let me know the result. I will excuse you now.'

We found The Seraph lounging in a chair in the schoolroom.

'Too bad about the dumpling, old boy,' I said consolingly.

'Oh, not too bad,' he replied. 'Mary Ellen fetched it up the back stairs to me. I 'm vewy full.'

That afternoon we saw Captain Pegg go for a walk with his son and daughter-in-law. He looked quite altered in a long gray coat and tall hat. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Pegg seemed proud to walk with him.

The following day was warm and sunny. When lessons were over we rushed to our bedroom window, and to our joy we found that the window opposite was wide open, the wicker cage on the sill, with the starling inside swelling up and preening himself in the sunshine, while just beyond sat Captain Pegg smoking a long pipe.

He seemed delighted to see us.

'Avast, my hearties!' he cried. 'It 's glorious sailing weather, but I 've just been lying at anchor here, on the chance of sighting you. It does my heart good, y' see, to talk with some of my own kind, and leave off pretending to be an archæologist — to stretch my mental legs, as it were. Well — have you taken your bearings this morning?'

'Captain Pegg,' I broke out with my heart tripping against my blouse, 'you said something the other day about buried treasure. Did you really find some? And would you mind telling us how you set about it?'

'Yes,' he replied meditatively, 'many a sack of treasure trove I 've unearthed. But the most curious find of all, I got without searching and without blood being spilt. I was lying quiet those days, about forty years ago, off the north of the Orkney Islands. Well, one morning I took a fancy to explore some of the outlying rocks and little islands dotted here and there. So I started off in a yawl with four seamen to row me; and not seeing much but barren

rocks and stunted shrubs about, I bent over the stern and stared into the sea. It was as clear as crystal.

'As we were passing through a narrow channel between two rocky islands, I bade the men rest on their oars, for something strange below had arrested my attention. I now could see plainly, in the green depths, a Spanish galleon, standing upright, held as in a vice by the grip of the two great rocks. She must have gone down with all hands, when the greater part of the Spanish Armada was wrecked on the shores of Britain.

'"Shiver my timbers, lads!" I cried, "here 'll be treasure in earnest! Back to the ship for our diving-suits! Booty for every one, and plum duff for dinner!"

'Well, to make a long story short, I and four of the trustiest of the crew put on our diving-suits, and soon we were walking the slippery decks once trodden by Spanish grandees and soldiers, and the scene of many a bloody fight, I 'll be bound. Their skeletons lay about the deck, wrapped in sea-tangle, and from every crevice of the galleon tall red and green and yellow and purple weeds had sprung, that waved and shivered with the motion of the sea. Her decks were strewn with shells and sand, and in and out of her rotted ribs frightened fish darted at our approach. It was a gruesome sight.

'Three weeks we worked, carrying the treasure to our own ship, and I began to feel as much at home under water as above it. At last we set sail without mishap, and every man on board had his share, and some of them gave up pirating and settled down as innkeepers and tradesmen.'

As the sound of his deep voice ceased, we three were silent also, gazing longingly into his eyes, that were so like the sea.

Then — 'Captain Pegg,' said Angel, in a still small voice, 'I don't — s'pose — you 'd know of any hidden treasure hereabouts? We 'd most awfully like to find some. It 'd be a jolly thing to write and tell father!'

A droll smile flickered over the bronzed features of Captain Pegg. He brought down his fist on the window-sill.

'Well, if you aren't chaps after my own heart!' he cried. 'Treasure about here? I was just coming to that — and a most curious happening it is! There was a cabin-boy, — name of Jenks, — a lad that I trusted and loved like my own son, who stole the greater part of my share of the treasure, and though I scoured the globe for him,' — the captain's eyes rolled fiercely, — 'I found neither trace of him nor the treasure, till two years ago. It was in Madagascar that I received a message from a dying man, confessing that, shaken by remorse, he had brought what was left of the plunder and buried it in Mrs. Handsomebody's back yard.'

'Mrs. Handsomebody's back yard!' We chanted the words in utter amazement.

'Just that,' affirmed Captain Pegg solemnly. 'Jenks found out that I owned the house next door, but he dared not bury the treasure there because the yard was smoothly sodded, and would show up any disturbance; while Mrs. H.'s yard, being covered with planks, was just the thing. So he simply raised one of the planks, dug a hole, and deposited the sack containing the last of the treasure, and wrote me his confession. And there you are!'

He smiled benignly on us. I longed to hug him.

The wind swooped and whistled down the alley, and the starling gave little sharp twittering noises and cocked his head.

'When, oh, when?' we burst out; 'to-night? May we search for it to-night, Captain Pegg?'

He reflected. 'No-o. Not to-night. Jenks, you see, sent me a plan of the yard, with a cross to mark where the treasure lies, and I 'll have to hunt it up so as not to waste our time turning up the whole yard. But to-morrow night — yes, to-morrow at midnight we 'll start the search!'

IV

At dinner that day the rice-pudding had the flavor of ambrosia. By night-fall preparations were already on foot.

First, the shovel had been smuggled from the coal-cellar and secreted in a corner of the yard behind the ash-barrel, together with an iron crowbar to use as a lever, and an empty sack to aid in the removal of the treasure.

I scarcely slept that night; and when I did, my mind was filled with wild imaginings. The next morning we were heedless scholars indeed, and at dinner I ate so little that Mrs. Handsomebody was moved to remark jocularly that somebody not a thousand miles away was shaping for a bilious bout.

At four o'clock Captain Pegg appeared at his window, looking the picture of cheerful confidence. He said it warmed his heart to be at his old profession again, and indeed I never saw a merrier twinkle in any one's eyes. He had found the plan of the yard sent by Jenks, and he had no doubt that we should soon be in possession of the Spanish treasure.

'But there 's one thing, my lads,' he said solemnly: 'I make no claim whatever to any share in this booty. Let that be understood. Anything we find is to be yours entirely. If I were to take any such goods into my son's house, his wife would get suspicious, and uncomfortable questions would be asked, and it 'd be all up with this archæologist business.'

'Could n't you hide it under your bed?' I suggested.

'Oh, she 'd be sure to find it,' he replied sadly. 'She 's into everything. And even if they did n't locate it till I am dead, they 'd feel disgraced to think their father had been a pirate. You 'll have to take it.'

We agreed, therefore, to ease him of the responsibility of his strangely gotten gain. We then parted, with the understanding that we were to meet him in the alley between the two houses promptly at midnight, and that in the meantime, we were to preserve a calm and commonplace demeanor.

With the addition of four crullers and a slab of cold bread pudding filched from the pantry, our preparations were now complete.

We were well-disciplined little animals; we always went to bed without a murmur, but on this night we literally flew there. The Seraph ended his prayers with — 'And for this piwate tweasure make us twuly thankful. Amen.'

The next moment we had dived under the bedclothes and snuggled there in wild expectancy.

From half-past seven to twelve is a long stretch. The Seraph slept peacefully. Angel or I rose every little while and struck a match to look at the clock. At nine we were so hungry that we ate all four crullers. At eleven we ate the slab of cold bread pudding. After that we talked less, and I think Angel dozed, but I lay staring in the direction of the window, watching for the brightness which would signify that Captain Pegg was astir and had lighted his gas.

At last it came — a pale and trembling messenger, that showed our little room to me in a new aspect — one of mystery and grotesque shadows.

I was on my feet in an instant. I shook Angel's shoulder.

'Up with you!' I whispered, hoarsely. 'The hour has come!'

I knew that drastic measures must be taken with The Seraph, so I just grasped him under the armpits and stood him on his feet without a word. He wobbled for a space, digging his knuckles in his eyes.

The hands of the clock pointed to ten minutes to twelve.

Angel and I hastily pulled on our trousers; and he, who liked to dress the part, stuck a knife in his belt and twisted a scarlet silk handkerchief (borrowed from Mary Ellen) round his head. His dark eyes glistened under its folds.

The Seraph and I went unadorned, save that he girt his trusty sword about his stout middle and I carried a toy bayonet.

Down the inky-black stairs we crept, scarcely breathing. The lower hall seemed cavernous. I could smell the old carpets and the haircloth covering of the chairs. We sidled down the back hall among goloshes, umbrellas, and Turk's-head dusters. The back door had a key like that of a jail.

Angel tried it with both hands, but though it grated horribly, it stuck. Then I had a try, and could not resist a triumphant click of the tongue when it turned, for Angel was a vain fellow and took a rise out of being the elder.

And when the moonlight shone upon us in the yard! — oh, the delicious freedom of it! We hopped for joy.

In the alley we awaited our leader. Between the houses we could see the low half-moon, hanging like a tilted bird's nest in the dark-blue sky, while a group of stars fluttered near it like young birds. The cathedral chimes sounded the hour of midnight.

Soon we heard the stealthy steps of Captain Pegg, and we gasped as we saw him; for in place of his flowered dressing-gown he wore breeches and top boots, a loose shirt with a blue neckerchief knotted at the throat, and, gleaming at his side, a cutlass.

He smiled broadly when he saw us.

'Well, if you are n't armed — every man-jack of you — even to the bantling!' he cried. 'Capital!'

'My sword, she 's *weal*,' said The Seraph with dignity. 'Sometimes I fight giants.'

Captain Pegg then shook hands with each of us in turn, and we thrilled at being treated as an equal by such a man.

'And now to work!' he said, heartily. 'Here is the plan of the yard as sent by Jenks.'

We could see it plainly by the moonlight, all neatly drawn out, even to the ash-barrel and the clothes-dryer, and there, on the fifth plank from the end, was a cross in red ink, and beside it the magic word — 'Treasure'!

Captain Pegg inserted the crowbar in a wide crack between the fourth and fifth boards, then we all pressed our full weight upon it with a 'Yo heave ho, my hearties!' from our chief.

The board flew up and we flew down, sprawling on the ground. Somehow the captain, being versed in such matters, kept his feet, though he staggered a bit.

Then, in an instant, we were pulling wildly at the plank to dislodge it. This we accomplished after much effort, and a dark, dank recess was disclosed.

Captain Pegg dropped to his knees, and with his hand explored cautiously under the planks. His face fell.

'Shiver my timbers if I can find it!' he muttered.

'Let me try!' I cried eagerly.

Both Angel and I thrust our hands in also and fumbled among the moist lumps of earth.

Captain Pegg now lighted a match and held it in the aperture. It cast a glow upon our tense faces.

'Hold it closer!' implored Angel. 'This way — right here — don't you see?'

At the same moment we both had seen the heavy metal ring that projected, ever so little, above the surface of the earth. We grasped it simultaneously and pulled. Captain Pegg lighted another match. It was heavy — oh, so heavy!

— but we got it out: a fair-sized leather bag bound with thongs. To one of these was attached the ring we had first caught sight of.

Now, kneeling as we were, we stared up in Captain Pegg's face. His wide blue eyes had somehow got a different look.

'Little boys,' he said gently, 'open it!

There in the moonlight, we unloosed the fastening of the bag and turned its contents out upon the bare boards. The treasure lay disclosed then, a glimmering heap, as if, out of the dank earth, we had digged a patch of moonshine.

We squatted on the boards around it, our heads touching, our wondering eyes filled with the magic of it.

'It is treasure,' murmured Angel, in an awe-struck voice, 'real treasure trove. Will you tell us, Captain Pegg, what all these things are?'

Captain Pegg, squatting like the rest of us, ran his hands meditatively through the strange collection.

'Why, strike me purple,' he growled, 'if that scamp Jenks has n't kept most of the gold coins and left us only the silver! But here 's three golden doubloons, all right, one apiece for ye! And here 's ducats and silver florins, and pieces of eight — and some I can't name till I get the daylight on them. It 's a pretty bit of treasure all told; and see here — '

He held up two old Spanish watches, just the thing for gentlemen adventurers.

We boys were now delving into the treasure on our own account, and brought to light a brace of antiquated pistols, an old silver flagon, a compass, a wonderful set of chessmen carved from ivory, and some curious shells, that delighted The Seraph. And other quaint things there were

that we handled reverently, and coins of different countries, square and round, and some with holes bored through.

We were so intent upon our discovery that none of us heard the approaching footsteps till they were fair upon us. Then, with a start, we turned, and saw to our horror Mrs. Handsomebody and Mary Ellen, with her hair in curl-papers, and close behind them, Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Pegg, scantily attired, the gentleman carrying a revolver.

'David! John! Alexander!' gobbled Mrs. Handsomebody.

'Now what d 'ye think of that!' came from Mary Ellen.

'Father! Have you gone quite mad?' cried Mrs. Pegg. And — 'Oh, I say, governor,' stammered the gentleman with the revolver.

Captain Pegg rose to his feet with dignity.

'These young gentlemen,' he said, simply, 'have with my help been able to locate some buried treasure, which was stolen from me years ago by a man named Jenks, and has lain hidden here since two decades. I hereby renounce all claim to it in favor of my three brave friends!'

Mr. Pegg was bent over the treasure.

'Now, look here, sir,' he said, rather sharply, 'some of this seems to be quite valuable stuff — '

'I know the value of it to a penny,' replied his father, with equal asperity, 'and I intend that it shall belong solely and wholly to these boys.'

'Whatever are you rigged up like that for?' demanded his daughter-in-law.

'As gentlemen of spirit,' replied Captain Pegg, patiently, 'we chose to dress the part. We do what we can to keep a little glamour and gayety in the world. Some folk' — he looked at Mrs. Handsomebody — 'would like to discipline it all away.'

'I think,' said our governess, 'that considering it is *my* back yard, I have some claim to — '

'None at all, madam — none at all!' interrupted Captain Pegg. 'By all the rules of treasure-hunting, the finder keeps the treasure.'

Mrs. Handsomebody was silenced. She did not wish to quarrel with the Peggs.

Mrs. Pegg moved closer to her.

'Mrs. Handsomebody,' she said, winking her white eyelashes very fast, 'I really do not think that you should allow your pupils to accept this — er — treasure. My father-in-law has become very eccentric of late, and I am positive that he himself buried these things very recently. Only day before yesterday, I saw that set of ivory chessmen on his writing-table.'

'Hold your tongue, Sophia!' shouted Captain Pegg loudly.

Mr. Mortimer Pegg looked warningly at his wife.

'All right, governor! Don't you worry,' he said, taking his father's arm. 'It shall be just as you say; but one thing is certain, you 'll take your death of cold if you stay out in this night air.'

As he spoke, he turned up the collar of his coat.

Captain Pegg shook hands with a grand air with Angel and me, then he lifted The Seraph in his arms and kissed him.

'Good-night, bantling!' he said, softly. 'Sleep tight!'

He turned then to his son.

'Mort,' said he, 'I have n't kissed a little boy like that since you were just so high.'

Mr. Pegg laughed and shivered, and they went off quite amiably, arm in arm, Mrs. Pegg following, muttering to herself.

Mrs. Handsomebody looked disparagingly at the treas-

ure. 'Mary Ellen,' she ordered, 'help the children to gather up that rubbish, and come in at once! Such an hour it is!'

Mary Ellen, with many exclamations, assisted in the removal of the treasure to our bedroom. Mrs. Handsomebody, after seeing it deposited there, and us safely under the bedclothes, herself extinguished the gas.

'I shall write to your father,' she said, severely, 'and tell him the whole circumstance. *Then* we shall see what is to be done with *you*, and with the *treasure*.'

With this veiled threat she left us. We snuggled our little bodies together. We were cold.

'I 'll write to father myself, to-morrow, an' 'splain everything,' I announced.

'D' you know,' mused Angel, 'I b'lieve I 'll be a pirate, 'stead of a civil engineer like father. I b'lieve there 's more in it.'

'I 'll be an engineer just the same,' said I.

'I fink,' murmured The Seraph, sleepily, 'I fink I 'll jus' be a bishop, an' go to bed at pwoper times an' have poached eggs for tea.'

THE PRINCESS OF MAKE-BELIEVE

ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL

The Princess was washing dishes. On her feet she would barely have reached the rim of the great dish-pan, but on the soap-box she did very well. A grimy calico apron trailed to the floor.

'Now this golden platter I must wash *extry* clean,' the Princess said. 'The Queen is ve-ry particular about her golden platters. Last time, when I left one o' the corners, — it's such a nextremely heavy platter to hold, — she gave me a scold, — oh, I mean, — I mean she tapped me a little love pat on my cheek with her golden spoon.'

It was a great brown-veined stoneware platter, and the arms of the Princess ached with holding it. Then, in an unwary instant, it slipped out of her soapsudsy little fingers and crashed to the floor. Oh! oh! the Queen! the Queen! She was coming! The Princess heard her shrill, angry voice, and felt the jar of her heavy steps. There was the space of an instant — an instant is so short! — before the storm broke.

'You little limb o' Satan! That's my best platter, is it? Broke all to bits, eh? I'll break' — But there was a flurry of dingy apron and dingier petticoats, and the little Princess had fled. She did not stop till she was in her Secret Place among the willows. Her small lean face was pale, but undaunted.

'Th-the Queen is n't feeling very well to-day,' she panted. 'It's wash-day up at the Castle. She never enjoys herself on wash-days. And then that golden platter — I'm sorry I smashed it all to flinders! When the Prince comes I shall ask him to buy another.'

The Prince had never come, but the Princess waited for him patiently. She sat with her face to the west and looked for him to come through the willows with the red sunset light filtering across his hair. That was the way the Prince was coming, though the time was not set. It might be a good while before he came, and then again — you never could tell!

'But when he does, and we've had a little while to get acquainted, then I shall say to him, "Hear, O Prince, and give ear to my — my petition! For verily, verily, I have broken many golden platters and jasper cups and saucers, and the Queen, long live her! is sore — sore — "'

The Princess pondered for the forgotten word. She put up a little lean brown hand and rubbed a tingling spot on her temple — ah, not the Queen! It was the Princess — long live her! — who was 'sore.'

'"I beseech thee, O Prince," I shall say, "buy new golden platters and jasper cups and saucers for the Queen, and then shall I verily, verily be — be — "'

Oh, the long words — how they slipped out of reach! The little Princess sighed rather wearily. She would have to rehearse that speech so many times before the Prince came. Suppose he came to-night! Suppose she looked up now, this minute, toward the golden west, and he was there, swinging along through the willow canes toward her!

But there was no one swinging along through the willows. The yellow light flickered through — that was all. Somewhere, a long way off, sounded the monotonous hum of men's voices. Through the lace-work of willow twigs there showed the faintest possible blur of color. Down beyond, in the clearing, the Castle Guards in blue jean blouses were pulling stumps. The Princess could not see their dull, passionless faces, and she was glad of it. The Castle Guards depressed her. But they were not as bad as the Castle

Guardesses. *They* were mostly old women with bleared, dim eyes, and they wore such faded — silks.

'*My* silk dress is rather faded,' murmured the little Princess wistfully.

She smoothed down the scant calico skirt with her brown little fingers. The patch in it she would not see.

'I shall have to have the Royal Dressmaker make me another one soon. Let me see — what color shall I choose? I'd *like* my gold-colored velvet made up. I'm tired of wearing royal purple dresses all the time, though of course I know they're appropriater. I wonder what color the Prince would like best? I should rather choose that color.'

The Princess's little brown hands were clasped about one knee, and she was rocking herself slowly back and forth, her eyes, wistful and wide, on the path the Prince would come. She was tired to-day and it was harder to wait.

'But when he comes I shall say, "Hear, O Prince. Verily, verily, I did not know which color you would like to find me dressed — I mean arrayed — in, and so I beseech thee excuse — *pardon*, I mean, mine infirmity." '

The Princess was not sure of 'infirmity,' but it sounded well. She could not think of a better word.

'And then — I *think* then — he will take me in his arms, and his face will be all sweet and splendid like the Mother o' God's in the picture, and he will whisper, — I don't think he will say it out loud, — oh, I'd rather not! — "Verily, Princess," he will whisper, "oh, verily, *verily*, thou hast found favor in my sight!" And that will mean that he does n't care what color I am, for he — loves — me.'

Lower and lower sank the solemn voice of the Princess. Slower and slower rocked the little lean body. The birds themselves stopped singing at the end. In the Secret Place it was very still.

'Oh, no, no, no, — not *verily!*' breathed the Princess, in

soft awe. For the wonder of it took her breath away. She had never in her life been loved, and now, at this moment, it seemed so near! She thought she heard the footsteps of the Prince.

They came nearer. The crisp twigs snapped under his feet. He was whistling.

'Oh, I can't look! — I can't!' gasped the little Princess, but she turned her face to the west, — she had always known it would be from the west, — and lifted closed eyes to his coming. When he got to the Twisted Willow she might dare to look — to the Little Willow Twins, anyway.

'And I shall know when he does,' she thought. 'I shall know the minute!'

Her face was rapt and tender. The miracle she had made for herself, — the gold she had coined out of her piteous alloy, — was it not come true at last? — Verily, verily?

Hush! Was the Prince not coming through the willows? And the sunshine was trickling down on his hair! The Princess knew, though she did not look.

'He is at the Twisted Willow,' she thought. '*Now* he is at the Little Willow Twins.'

But she did not open her eyes. She did not dare. This was a little different, she had never counted on being afraid.

The twigs snapped louder and nearer — now very near. The merry whistle grew clearer, and then it stopped.

'Hullo!'

Did princes say 'Hullo!'

The Princess had little time to wonder, for he was there before her. She could feel his presence in every fibre of her trembling little being, though she would not open her eyes for very fear that it might be somebody else. No, no, it was the Prince! It was his voice, clear and ringing, as she had known it would be. She put up her hands suddenly and covered her eyes with them to make surer. It was not

fear now, but a device to put off a little longer the delight of seeing him.

'I say, hullo! Have n't you got any tongue?'

'Oh, verily, verily, — I mean hear, O Prince, I beseech,' she panted.

The boy's merry eyes regarded the shabby small person in puzzled astonishment. He felt an impulse to laugh and run away, but his royal blood forbade either. So he waited.

'You are the Prince,' the little Princess cried. 'I've been waiting the longest time, — but I knew you'd come,' she added simply. 'Have you got your velvet an' gold buckles on? I'm goin' to look in a minute, but I'm waiting to make it spend.'

The Prince whistled softly. 'No,' he said then, 'I did n't wear *them* clo'es to-day. You see, my mother —'

'The Queen,' she interrupted; 'you mean the Queen?'

'You bet I do! She's a reg'lar-builter! Well, she don't like to have me wearin' out my best clo'es every day,' he said gravely.

'No,' eagerly, 'nor mine don't. Queen, I mean, — but she is n't a mother, mercy, no! I only wear silk dresses every day, not my velvet ones. This silk one is getting a little faded.'

She released one hand to smooth the dress wistfully. Then she remembered her painfully practiced little speech and launched into it hurriedly.

'Hear, O Prince. Verily, verily, I did not know which color you'd like to find me dressed in — I mean *arrayed*. I beseech thee to excuse — oh, *pardon*, I mean —'

But she got no further. She could endure the delay no longer, and her eyes flew open.

She had known his step; she had known his voice. She knew his face. It was terribly freckled, and she had not expected freckles on the face of the Prince. But the merry,

honest eyes were the Prince's eyes. Her gaze wandered downward to the home-made clothes and bare, brown legs, but without uneasiness. The Prince had explained about his clothes. Suddenly, with a shy, glad little cry, the Princess held out her hands to him.

The royal blood flooded the face of the Prince and filled in all the spaces between its little gold-brown freckles. But the Prince held out his hand to her. His lips formed for words and she thought he was going to say, 'Verily, Princess, thou hast found favor —'

'Le' 's go fishin',' the Prince said.

THE TWO APPLES

JAMES EDMUND DUNNING

When the morning of the sixteenth day broke out from the gray battlements to the east'ard, only two live men remained on the raft which more than two weeks before had left the splintered side of the barkentine; besides, there was one dead man, and his body counted three out of a dozen who had clung to the raft until ten starved to death because they could not live on red apples and brine.

Zadoc roused as much as a man can when every morning he wakens less and less until some day he does not waken at all. Jeems lay staring at the sun as at a stranger's face.

'Turn out, Jeems,' said Zadoc, when he had worked some life back into his thickening tongue, 'till we put him over.'

They rolled the body into the sea with no words or ceremonials to mark the end, except that Jeems, when some part of the splash stung his face, struck off the drops with trembling, horrified hands.

'Two apples left,' said Zadoc, not in any tentative sounding of possibilities, but with finality forced home by a fact so plain and near as to render evasion needless.

'One for to-day,' said Jeems, 'the — the other one for to-morrow.'

'The *last* one for to-morrow!' returned Zadoc, bold as ever. 'Let us wait as long as we can before breakfast!'

The raft drifted many hours, following the sun around the fatal, empty bowl. Jeems broke that vast silence.

'Zadoc, I must eat something. My head is — you know — my head!'

'So does mine,' said Zadoc. 'Cut the first apple in two.'

It takes so little to satisfy, when one is starving, and that little goes so very fast! When Zadoc put his furred teeth into half the first apple, it was as if he had not tasted such since he left Cape Cod a dozen years before. His mind, strained with a long, unrealized hope, forgot the timbers on which his bent muscles clung, and went back to an orchard he had known — where such apples always grew. The cool air from the shadows underneath the tree-rows seemed interlaid with waves of heat and the loved odors of the sunlit seaside farm, — that long slope from the meadow land up, up and up beneath the slant uncertain fence to where the white top-sides of the house were vividly set off in green, — till Zadoc came to himself and understood that the smell was only the damp breath of the Atlantic, and the heat the plunging agony which flowed from his own tense heart. The first apple was gone.

The two men's eyes conversed in brief. Then Zadoc said, —

'I'm going to sleep again, if it *is* sleep. Anyway, I'm tired. Can you stay up a while?'

'It's my trick,' consented Jeems.

Neither spoke of the approaching end, but when they had sat staring at each other a time, — for mad men's minds move with but a mock agility, Zadoc said, –

'Put the second apple under the tin cup in the middle of the raft, and keep it there.'

When the apple was safe, Zadoc held out his right hand.

'Until I wake, Jeems!' he said.

'It is safe there,' was the answer.

And Zadoc lay down on the soggy timbers, satisfied, with faith in the honor of his starving mate.

To Jeems, who watched, the sea looked as never in his life before. For years he had enslaved it. As a tough Mount

Desert fisher-boy, he had bound it to his childish will; and in many later years afloat had thrown back its innumerable challenges with all contempt until the Last Time. In sailors' lives, birth and the marriage-day bow down to the Last Time. It always comes, when Fortune or the years have made them blindly bold.

His courage fled before the onslaught of these terrible seas which, high above the level of his blurring eyes, swept up in a torturous parade, as if Death maddened his victims by passing his grand divisions in review.

Besides, the pain of hunger so outgrew all reason! It cut through the man's thin body like the blade of a great and sudden sorrow in one's heart, through and through, ever returning, never going!

A greater sea than the others rolled underneath the raft, and shook the loose boards so that the tin dipper rolled on its inverted rim, and then fell tinkling back again. Jeems crawled to where he could lift the dipper and see beneath. The second apple lay secure, its plump sides a shocking contrast to the terrors of the raft. Jeems looked hard. A cruel pain shot from his throat to his heels in a tearing red-hot spiral. The first apple had so cooled his mouth! Water began running off Jeems's chin. If he could only run his fingers down those rounding sides, maybe they would catch some of the orchard smell.

Jeems clapped the dipper down with a sudden muscular fury, and kicked Zadoc into sense with such vigor that he fell exhausted from the effort.

'I was so lonesome, I thought I might go off,' he explained, adding, 'Zadoc, what's your family?'

'Five and the wife, God help 'em,' said Zadoc, not dramatically either, but just dully, as if it was what his mind had grown to know very much better than anything else. 'Have you?'

'No,' said Jeems. 'Years ago, I called on a pretty girl over to Somesville, but nothing came of it.'

'Just as well now,' said Zadoc coldly; adding, half in dream, 'I recollect *all* them Somesville girls was pretty. 'Lizabeth come from there.'

'Who?' asked Jeems.

''Lizabeth, — the wife, — why, she was your sister, Jeems!'

'So she was! I forgot!'

Many madmen speak in the past tense at the stage where they seem to look back on their proper selves.

The sun neared the west.

'Lie down again,' said Jeems; 'I'll watch.'

'Any sail — that time before?'

'No sail, Zadoc.'

The wind dropped near night, and Jeems lay on the raft with eyes that glowed back the red reflection of the setting sun. As it moved toward the liquid line of sea, its brilliance fell into the smother of a cloud through which its sides shone with the softened, satin polish of the second apple as Jeems last saw it. The thought struck him in the middle of his heart, which began leaping as when, at nineteen, a girl's smooth fingers lingered on his own. He hungered for sight of the second apple as for nothing else in the whole of the world before. He wished the raft might roll so violently as to throw off the dipper, and then, before he realized, his own foot had kicked it into the ocean and the apple smiled before him, securely laid between two great planks at the bottom of the raft. Zadoc slept. Jeems was alone with the second apple!

He looked at it between caked lids and let his eyes rove over and over its rare beauties. For the first time since he was born, his whole being — the knotted body whose abundant energies had been quite absorbed by the ardu-

ous doings of his roving life, and the big heart of him where the rich red of the blood was pent and packed with never a bit of an outlet for relief — thrilled with the keen, delicious mystery of Desire. His meagre lips, crackling like snake-skin, repeated in monotone, as if to hold his conscience under some mesmeric charm, 'I must! I must!'

The mere thought of the cool heart of the fruit made his pulse spring as if whipped. To imagine the exquisite satisfaction which would follow his teeth as they sank slowly, slowly — sank farther and farther through those moistening walls until, at the very acme of delight, they met! Christ! He was on it in an instant, holding it with both hands and not lifting it, but just putting his face down and keeping it so in a passionate embrace. He *would* eat, if he died for it. He *must* —

''Lizabeth!' It was Zadoc, dreaming.

''Lizabeth! Good old girl. Good girl. Bye-bye, home at sundown. Good old, good — ah-h-h-h!'

The voice fell away in an idiotic sigh. Jeems sprang to his feet and stood swaying with the raft, the image of his sister in his eyes. Off east, where the gray shades grew, he saw her walking on the sea, her long hair blown before, like a cloud of jet-black flame, and her face all lovely.

''Lizabeth!' Jeems spread his arms; but she did not see him, for she looked at Zadoc as he lay there at her brother's feet, and her eyes rained love, which calmed the sea like oil.

And then Jeems saw himself as if from far. ''Lizabeth!' he cried; but she did not hear, so he held his two arms up toward the sky and whispered, 'God, God, *God!* Forgive Jeems Harbutt, a wicked sinner, — and take him,' — his voice sank to a low, unhuman key, — 'and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever — O God!'

And with arms still raised in suppliance for his great unselfish soul, he sprang out backward to the darkening sea.

THE PURPLE STAR

BY REBECCA HOOPER EASTMAN

I

When the Fifth Graders returned in the fall, they knew, to a boy and a girl, that they were to go to Room H, and they knew, too, that by passing over the threshold they would automatically become the elderly and dignified Sixth Grade. Proud and disdainful were Sixth Graders, in that they carried the largest geographies made; highly pedantic, too, were they, because they coped with mysterious institutions called fractions, which occupied the clean, unexplored back part of one's arithmetic. Fearsomely learned were they in words of seven, eight, and nine syllables. To be one of such was to be indeed Grown Up. When the new class, half-timorous, and wholly suspicious, entered Room H, they were startled to find their thirty names already written in a neat column on the blackboard, with an imperative 'Do Not Erase' underneath. How on earth had Miss Prawl found out their names?

It was hard for Theodora Bowles to take her seat inconspicuously, as if she were no better than stupid Freddy Beal; as if, in fact, she had not been for five years the leader of the class. Theodora, however, was not nearly so obscure as she supposed; for Miss Prawl, in secret session with the Fifth-Grade teacher, had been informed that Theodora was so quick-witted that she usually called out the answer before the teacher had finished putting the question. Furthermore, whenever the class was asked to recite in concert, she invariably shouted the answer first, and then the rest of the class repeated what Theodora had said, and

were therefore always right. The fact that she knew more than any one but the teacher had made Theodora's life one delightful arrogance of intellectual supremacy. Pretending that she was royalty in disguise, Theodora gazed impatiently at Miss Prawl, and wondered how long it would be before the new teacher found out how bright she was.

After all the children were located at desks corresponding to the ones they had occupied in Grades Five, Four, Three, Two, and One, Miss Prawl opened a drawer of her shiny, spotless desk, and took out a box which proved to contain six new pieces of different-colored chalk, lying side by side. The combination of the bright colors was so alluring that every child immediately resolved to save up for just such an outfit, in order to play hopscotch in colors. With every eager eye riveted upon her, Miss Prawl took out the piece of pink chalk, and made a very beautiful pink star on the blackboard, directly after Stella Appleton's name. Stella, it may be said, always had a good deal of undeserved prominence, because her name began with an A.

'If, at the end of the week, Stella or any one of the rest of you is perfect in spelling, that person will get a pink star after his name,' announced Miss Prawl. And she put away the pink chalk, and drew a blue-chalk star after Freddy Beal's name. 'You will all receive blue stars if you are perfect in arithmetic,' she continued. 'And yellow —' she drew a yellow star — 'yellow is for perfect geography. Green' — she made a green star — 'green is for perfect reading; and red —' Miss Prawl paused impressively — '*red* is for perfect deportment.'

After this entrancing monologue, Miss Prawl rubbed out the explanatory stars, replaced the chalk carefully in the box, and waited. Theodora's hand at once shot up into the air.

'Well?' asked Miss Prawl.

'My-name's-Theodora-Bowles,' said Theodora. 'And there's a piece of purple chalk in your box, Miss Prawl, that you did n't say anything about. And so I wondered if you had n't forgotten to tell us about purple stars.'

The whole class leaned forward in breathless expectancy, proud of their discerning Theodora.

'I am very glad that you asked me this question, Theodora,' said Miss Prawl. 'I keep the purple chalk for a very special, wonderful reason.' Thirty pairs of glistening eyes grew rounder. 'The purple star,' said Miss Prawl, in a hushed voice, 'is the greatest reward that I can bestow on any girl or boy. It is given only for some very great deed: for some deed which shall show that the girl or boy is either very brave or very kind, or both. Although I have seen a great many fine girls and boys, it has never happened that I felt that the right time had come to give any one a purple star. But perhaps this will be purple-star year.'

Theodora listened with a great dawning worship in her eyes. How exciting it was of Miss Prawl to set up such an impossibly high standard! And how altogether interesting Miss Prawl was, too! Her eyes seemed much given to dancing and twinkling; her voice was sweet and pleasant, being especially persuasive when she said 'boy' or 'girl'; and her smile was a blended maternal-siren affair which nobody of either sex had ever been able to resist. Miss Prawl made one feel a little ashamed, as if one had never before appreciated what a privilege and a responsibility it was to be a boy or a girl. The new teacher's dress was a soft, pretty brown, dainty and fresh. Yes, Theodora resolved that she must attain the purple star, and thus forever become famous.

Just as she had arrived at this engrossing decision, the hall door opened, and Mr. Wadsmore, the adored, portly principal, strode energetically in, leading a new boy. This

person, this upstart, this unidentified stranger, this perfect nobody of a new boy faced the critical, penetrating eyes of the assembled class with an almost superhuman ease.

'Miss Prawl, this young man is Charley Starr,' said Mr. Wadsmore. 'Can you make a place for him?'

Beside Theodora there was an empty seat, the only one in the room. As it was on the 'girls' side,' the male aspirants for education with difficulty smothered their roars of laughter at the idea of a boy's sitting, debased, among the girls. Observing this ill-concealed hilarity, Miss Prawl at once led Charley to the empty seat beside Theodora.

'If you'll sit here to-day, Charley, I will rearrange the seating to-morrow,' she said.

As Charley sank into the place assigned, Theodora blushed painfully. Being nearest to the unwelcome masculine stranger embarrassed her frightfully. Her hand flew up into the air.

'MayIgwoutandgettadrink?' she asked.

'Yes, Theodora,' replied Miss Prawl evenly.

She had heard of Theodora's continuous and unquenchable thirst, and had been advised by no less a person than Mr. Wadsmore that the best course was to allow Theodora to drink as much and as often as she wished.

After a copious raid on the water-cooler, Theodora returned, feeling a little bloated, but much more composed and natural.

'Five minutes for whispering,' announced Miss Prawl, at eleven o'clock.

A deafening hubbub immediately arose.

'Say,' began Charley Starr to Theodora, from behind his desk cover, 'how do you like *her?*' He nodded toward Miss Prawl, and winked.

Theodora was unwilling to indulge in the intimacies of gossip on so slight an acquaintance.

'Where'd you come from, anyway?' she icily inquired.

'Skipped up from the Fourth Grade.'

'You did!' Hauteur was drowned in awe.

'You bet. It's the second time I've skipped in this school, too.'

Theodora studied Charley with detached, incipient dislike. Charley must be very bright indeed to have skipped *two* classes. She herself, with all her brains, had never arrived at the pinnacle of skipping. And she had so much wanted to feel the importance of marching into chapel with the class next higher up, and of smiling back at her old mates with condescending tolerance. Theodora did not know that she might have skipped several times, but for the fact that her parents, who believed in the slow unfolding of her almost too brilliant mind, had begged to have her kept back.

All unconscious of this parental duplicity, Theodora was having some very uncomfortable minutes. If Charley Starr had skipped two classes, it looked as if the impossible were true — that there actually existed on the earth a person who was brighter than she. It could not be, and yet, and yet — Charley looked disturbingly intelligent. But there, of course he had not studied last year's subjects in detail, so he could not possibly compete with her. And when she received the purple star, she would be entirely safe. Star — why, the new boy's name was Star.

'Is your name spelled plain *S-t-a-r?*' she asked.

'*S-t-a-double r*,' replied Charley. 'I'm Charles Augustus Starr, Junior,' he said, in a bragging tone.

Theodora gave a shriek of delight, and punched the girl in front of her.

'Say, Laura, the new boy's father is Coal-Cart Starr!' she cried.

Laura immediately shrieked, too, and so did all the other

girls when they heard the news. Bewildered at so much noise, Miss Prawl rang the bell, and asked Theodora, who seemed to be a sort of cheer-leader, to look up the word 'whisper' in the large dictionary, and write the definition on the blackboard.

The cause of all the undue commotion was the fact that Charles Augustus Starr, Senior, was in the coal business, and that daily, all day long, up and down the city went huge coal carts labeled 'C. A. Starr.' At Theodora's instigation, the girls in her class had formed the 'C. A. Starr Club,' which was a very original organization. There were no dues, and the responsibilities were light. They consisted of merely looking upward into the sky, and of pointing upward simultaneously with the index finger of the right hand every time one met a coal cart. C. A. Starr was thus cunningly interpreted as 'See a star!' It rather spoiled things that there were no stars to be seen in the daytime, and that the club members never met any coal carts at night. Still, it was extremely good fun, when you caught sight of a coal cart, to point up and look up suddenly, and to have the vulgar, uninitiated outsider ask, 'What are you doing?' and then to explain that you belonged to a secret order, and that there were times when it was necessary to give the high sign.

As Theodora was president of the See-A-Star Club, she at once called a meeting, to be held at the noon hour, for the purpose of considering whether or not club members ought to give the high sign in the presence of C. A. Starr, Junior. It was at length decided by the president, who did all the talking, that they would point up and look up when they met C. A. Starr, Junior, outside the school grounds. Otherwise, with Charley Starr right there in the same room, they would have to be pointing up and looking up all the time, and Miss Prawl might with reason object.

'Say,' said Charley Starr to Theodora, in the afternoon whispering period, 'did you hear about the purple star?'

Theodora nodded. She was speechless, because she had just crammed an entire licorice 'shoe-string' into her mouth.

'Well, I'm laying all my plans to get that star,' proclaimed Charley.

'So'm I,' said Theodora, thickly, with black lips. 'So there's no use in your trying. I'd give up the idea, if I was you.'

'Not much I won't. I'd like to see a girl get ahead of *me*,' retorted Charles, witheringly.

Violent sex-antagonism sprang up full grown within the soul of Theodora. This insignificant upstart who casually skipped must be taught the lesson, once and for all, that school was one of the places where girls excelled.

'Let us refresh our memories by reviewing some of last year's geography,' said Miss Prawl, ringing the dinner-bell which called the class to order.

'Aha!' thought Theodora, swallowing the last of the shoe-string whole, — clearing the decks for action, as it were, — 'I guess I'll surprise C. A. Starr, Junior, *now!*'

'Recite in concert. What is the capital of Maine?' asked Miss Prawl.

'Augusta-on-the-Kennebec!' shouted Theodora Bowles and Charley Starr, as in one voice. 'Ter-ron-the-Kennebec!' echoed the rest of the class.

'What is the capital of New Hampshire?'

Again the two brilliant ones roared the right answer, and the rest recited, 'Curd-on-the-Merrimac!'

'Vermont?' continued Miss Prawl.

'Montpelier-on-the-Winooski!' yelled the rivals.

'She's going straight through the United States in order,' decided Theodora. 'I know 'em all, backwards and for-

wards, and I guess Charley Starr will get left long before we get to the Dakotas.'

'What is the capital of Rhode Island?' asked the wily Miss Prawl, who had noted the absent look on Theodora's face, and purposely omitted Massachusetts. And she caught everybody in the class.

'Boston-on-Massachusetts-Bay!' the leaders cried. And the parrots mimicked them.

Miss Prawl paused so long that Theodora recalled her question.

'Providence-and-Newport-on-Narragansett-Bay!' howled Charles Starr, *ahead* of Theodora, and in a voice that could be heard all over the building.

Theodora could scarcely keep back the flood of her tears. Charley Starr had thought quicker than she! It was the first time in all her life that she had been worsted, and — well, those smarting tears were already spilling over and showing.

'MayIgwoutandgettadrink?' she asked. And from the depths of the dressing-room, where she was sobbing into the heart of the roller towel, she could hear Charles, the usurper, yelling, —

'Harrisburg-on-the-Susquehanna!'

When Theodora felt able to return to society, the color which was usually in her cheeks seemed to have concentrated at the end of her nose, and her eyes looked sopping wet. Her intense little being, however, was all afire with determination to win the purple star.

II

At the end of the week, Theodora and Charles had each a pink, blue, yellow, green, and red star. So had several of the other children, for that matter, but Theodora well knew that these others would have an intellectual slump by the

third or fourth week. She was right, for at the end of the month, the names of Theodora Bowles and Charles Augustus Starr, Junior, were the only ones that had a complete set of stars after them.

'Miss Prawl, now, about what kind of a deed would a person have to do, to get a purple star?' queried Charley, one day when he had stayed after school for the express purpose of extracting some inside information from Miss Prawl.

'That's just exactly what Theodora asked me yesterday,' said Miss Prawl. 'The trouble is, I shan't know, myself until the deed is done.'

'Miss Prawl, now, if I saved the President of the United States from a runaway horse that wanted to stamp on him, would that deed get me a purple star?'

'It might,' admitted Miss Prawl. 'That would be a brave, kind act.'

'If he would only move to Brooklyn, I might stand some show,' yearned Charles.

'Now, Miss Prawl,' began Theodora excitedly, the day after the Thanksgiving recess, 'if I discovered something that nobody had ever discovered before, would that be a purple-star deed?'

'It would depend upon the nature of your discovery, Theodora. Of course, while the world could not progress without discoveries, they are not primarily brave or kind.'

'That's just the trouble,' sighed Theodora. But she still looked hopeful. 'Miss Prawl, now, would it be a purple-star deed, if I discovered that there was another sun up in the sky besides the one we are already using?'

'If you discovered anything as remarkable as that, Theodora, I should feel entirely justified in giving you a purple star,' replied Miss Prawl, reveling in Theodora's imagina-

tion. 'But you must n't worry about it,' she advised. 'And you must n't try too hard, dear.'

Theodora could hardly believe her ears. Dear! A schoolteacher had called her *dear*. How romantic she felt! She took her seat with such an expression of ecstasy on her face that Miss Prawl wondered what she could be thinking about now.

Although Miss Prawl had asked her not to try too hard, Theodora, under the impelling flattery of 'dear,' resolved that she would work more than ever to do something kindly brave or bravely kind. As there did n't seem to be any deeds of that sort lying round loose waiting to be done, Theodora worked up a bitter grudge against George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, who, before she was born, had taken a mean advantage of her by saving the country and freeing the slaves. Still, by thinking constantly of the purple star, and kind bravery, she hoped to keep in the proper frame of mind to recognize the great deed when it came along just aching to be done. Meanwhile, she practised brave kindness, by smiling lovingly and saying sweetly 'Good morning!' to the school janitor, who was a faithful, glowering old dog of a Scotchman — one of the few human beings who are impervious to blandishments. If any one ever spoke to him unnecessarily, this janitor fixed a murderous gaze on the offender, as if he would deeply relish killing him, if he were n't too busy mopping or washing blackboards. All those who were not practising bravery avoided him as much as possible.

It gets on one's nerves to try to live in perpetual exaltation, and Theodora was very often cross. Especially was she irritated at the sight of Charley Starr being driven home from school by a coxcombical groom, in a large, gleaming, red-wheeled cart, drawn by a nobby bob-tailed horse. Theodora herself lived just one block away from

the school, and walked humbly to and from the halls of learning. She was not jealous of Charles, but he annoyed her, because he completely upset her theory that all very rich children were correspondingly stupid. Usually one could work out the law of compensation very pleasantly, and in a way that was extremely complimentary to one's self. The only way in which she could revenge herself on her wealthy, fortunate, scintillating rival was to call meetings of the See-A-Star Club on a certain street-corner past which Charley and his liveried groom invariably drove. And when Charles was conveyed by, self-consciously, — he hated the pomp and polish which his mother prided herself upon, — the See-A-Star Club raised eyes and right hands, and gave its ear-piercing, steam-whistle 'yell.'

Charles always blushed deeply, being much embarrassed before the groom, and tried to wheedle Theodora into an explanation of her acts. She was, however, iron-heartedly uncommunicative, and continued her persecutions.

III

On a certain March afternoon, when it was snowing most unseasonably hard, and the children were drowsy and listless, Miss Prawl dismissed her class early, with instructions to go straight home, and to change their shoes and stockings the minute they got there. On account of the deep, blinding snow, Theodora reluctantly called off the meeting of the See-A-Star Club, and as she plunged home through the biting icy flakes, she mused on the futility of even trying to get a purple star. There was no use in hoping to excel Charley Starr in the matter of ordinary stars, because he was always perfect. Neither he nor she had so far been absent or late, and neither had failed in anything. The only solution, therefore, was to invent some way of being more than perfect.

As the snow continued to fall all night, and was still coming down the next morning, Theodora, besides her usual wraps, wore a pair of shiny, unused rubber boots, a Christmas present from her grandmother, who had always worn rubber boots to school when *she* was little, and thought that girls ought to now. With a somewhat lumbering gait, Theodora waded to school, and arrived just in time to see Charles Augustus Starr, Junior, being magnificently driven up in a regal sleigh with great accompanying jingling of bells, and waving in the wind of red and yellow plumes. Besides Charley and Theodora, very few of the class were present; and as for chapel — well, it looked desolate and emptily bleak, instead of being hot and crowded as usual.

Miss Prawl went through the lessons rapidly, and at eleven o'clock, Mr. Wadsmore put his head in the door, and said that school must be dismissed at once. There was a high gale, and the children were to go home as quickly as they could get there.

The next morning, the snowstorm had become a blizzard, a dangerous monster of a blizzard, in fact the one great historic blizzard — the blizzard of 1888. And the milkman left no milk at Theodora's house that morning. And the rooms were so dark that all the gas in the house had to be lit. And the choreman could n't come to fix the furnace, and the fire went out. Everything was cold, shivery, and unreal. Outside, the great banks of snow were impenetrable. From the downstairs rooms, you could n't have seen people on the other side of the street — supposing that there had been any people to see. A policeman went by on a floundering horse, but there were no wagons, and there was nobody walking — no red-faced jocose postman, no iceman, no sedate business men, no scurrying, scampering children.

As she pulled on her rubber boots, Theodora, who always planned to get to school before the doors were opened, decided to allow ten minutes extra that morning. At exactly half-past eight, the Scotch janitor always took down the big bar which held the double doors in place, and Theodora was invariably the first one in. It was not necessary for her to get there until ten minutes of nine, but she never ran the slightest risk of being tardy. In all her life, she had never been tardy or absent.

'Don't worry about me, mother, if I'm late to luncheon,' said Theodora, as she appeared in the dining-room door. 'It's so snowy that it will take me longer than usual.'

'Theodora, child,' remonstrated Mrs. Bowles, 'surely you don't think that I'm going to allow you to go to school?'

'Why, yes, mother,' said Theodora, with horrible misgiving none the less.

'You could n't get there alive,' declared her mother. 'There's no one on the street. It would be positively suicidal.'

Theodora began with tears, and just the usual methods of teasing; then, finding these trusty old friends unavailing, she launched forth into impromptu diplomatic schemes for extracting a 'yes.' She tried to trap her mother by means of a system of cross-questioning, and she endeavored to weary her, until she should impatiently exclaim, 'Oh, for mercy's sake, *go!*'

But her mother, for once, was relentless. Her father had given up all idea of going to his office, and while Theodora was arguing with her mother, Mr. Bowles went down cellar to build a furnace fire. He very rarely visited the cellar, and when he did, he always returned tremendously upset about something or other. Consequently, Theodora teased in a low voice so that her father should n't hear her through the registers. She hoped to win her mother's consent and

get away before her father wrathfully returned. Mrs. Bowles, however, seemed to get more flinty-hearted every minute. When ten minutes of nine came, and then nine minutes of nine, Theodora realized that never again, in all her life, could she say, 'I have never been tardy.'

She still hoped, however, that some higher power would intervene, and see to it that she got to school at nine. To be tardy was disgraceful enough, but to be absent was a crime that could never be expiated. Suddenly she ran into the library, and knelt rigidly on a rug which she had heard her mother refer to as a 'prayer rug.' And she all but prayed the soul out of her body that the rug would change into a magic carpet on which she could be transported to school. She must have invoked the wrong deity, for the rug did not stir even a hair's breadth. But perhaps kneeling was not enough; perhaps one ought to lie prone on the rug and pray.

She had just stretched out, full-length, face down, when the hall clock boomed the fatal nine. Now she was both tardy and absent. She was just like any other ordinary human child — she was undistinguished in any way. Well, there was really no use in continuing to live, and oh, for a convenient way to die! How badly her mother and father would feel when they found her stretched dead on the piano bench, and how they would blame themselves for not allowing her to have her way!

Weeping miserably from self-pity, Theodora pulled off her things, and sat down to look out at the storm, and plan her end.

'Come, Pussy, don't mope!' exclaimed her father. He had just finished a bitter dissertation on the short life of the modern coal-shovel when handled by the choreman of to-day, and was beginning to feel very good-natured again. 'Let's play backgammon.'

'I'm tardy, and I'm absent!' moaned Theodora, who had about abandoned the idea of dying, in favor of disappearing forever.

'There won't be any school on such a day as this,' said Mr. Bowles, consolingly. 'Even the teachers could n't get there and live.'

This happy suggestion made Theodora decidedly less pensive. Maybe — and oh, how she prayed that it might be so! — *maybe* her father was right, and maybe, after all, she was still a supreme being — one who had never been tardy or absent. As the day wore on, she became more and more hopeful. Her greatest comfort of all was the thought that Charles Augustus Starr, Junior, who lived over two miles from school, was even more surely a prisoner than herself.

It kept right on snowing that night. There was no discussion about any one's going out the following day, for the whole city seemed destined to be buried in the snow which fell unceasingly from low, inexhaustible clouds. Finally, after several days, when people were becoming seriously alarmed, and some of them were hungry, the snow stopped, and the sky turned into a dazzling blue from which a blinding sun again looked down on a new white city. And then men began to open their front doors again, and shovel and pant, and pant and shovel, as they dug their way out into the world. Gradually there began to be postmen and butcher-boys and milk-men and horsecars and newspaper-boys and policemen. And when Theodora's father started for his office, the long-pent-up Theodora was permitted to go to school.

IV

Although the small paths on the sidewalk were so slippery that the most nimble-footed kept tumbling down,

Theodora was, as usual, the first child against the school door. And she was the first to burst into the silent building when the Scotch janitor took down the bar, and the first to dash up the creaky wooden stairs. Racing down the echoing hall, she tore off her things in the dressing room, and rushed into Room H, fearing she knew not what. And the sight that she saw on the blackboard made her blood run cold. During her enforced absence, the very worst had happened. At the end of the long line of stars which followed the name of Charles Augustus was a prominent, unmistakably new star. It was larger than any of the pink or blue or red or green or yellow stars, and there was no doubt about it, for the sun shone warmly on the blackboard: the new star opposite her rival's name was — purple. The new boy, Coal-Cart Starr's son, the skipper of classes, the groom-escorted, never-absent, late, or wrong Charley Starr, had attained the unattainable.

Slowly Theodora put her books into her desk, and sat in her place, waiting grimly for Miss Prawl. It was only a few minutes later that the teacher came in, rosy from her short run through the snowy street, — she lived only three doors from the school, — and said cheerfully, without looking the least bit guilty, —

'Good morning, Theodora.'

Theodora could not reply. All the while the other children were bouncing in with shiny, apple-red cheeks, and a great flourishing of clean white pocket handkerchiefs, Theodora sat as still as a little China image. In the midst of her chagrin, she dreaded meeting the exultant look which she knew would be in the eyes of the winner of the purple star. Every time any one came in from the hall, Theodora jumped from nervousness. But she jumped in vain, because Charley Starr failed to appear. Even when it was ten minutes of nine, Charley Starr had not come. With a

triumphant lilt of the heart, Theodora thought, 'Charley Starr is late!'

At nine o'clock, it dawned upon her that Charley Starr was not coming to school at all. And at the same time, an unexplained lump of uncomfortable bigness suddenly developed in her throat. She was afraid — afraid that something had happened to Charley Starr. She did not know why, but a panic of terror seized her. It was the first big real fear of her life. The purple star on the blackboard became the sign of some heroic tragedy. Where, where, *where* was Charley Starr?

'Well, girls and boys,' began Miss Prawl, 'we have all been taking a very unexpected vacation. And there has been no school at all since you were all here before.'

Theodora's heart flippety-flopped with relief. All her sufferings had been in vain: she was still a supreme being. But what was the thing in Miss Prawl's face which made one sit so deadly still, and grasp the desk-cover so tight?

'I came to school on the first morning of the blizzard, because I live so near. And one other person came, too.' Her little audience began to look frightened. 'The only child who came that morning was brought in unconscious.'

Charley Starr was dead — Theodora had known it all along.

'At six o'clock on the first morning of the blizzard, Charley Starr, without any one's knowing he was awake, went out to his father's stable, and managed to saddle one of the horses. And in order not to be late to school, he left home at half-past six, and rode through the blinding snow, until, at nine o'clock, he reached the school. And when he finally got here, he was so exhausted that he tumbled off the horse into a snow-drift. If the janitor had n't happened to see him, there would be no Charley Starr in our class, or in the world to-day. But the janitor *did* see him; and so, although

Charley is pretty sick, he's going to get better and come back to us again. It seemed to me that it was very brave of Charles to try to come to school, and so I gave him the purple star. He does n't know it yet, but I am going to write to him to-day. And I want every girl and every boy who thinks I was right in giving him the star to clap with all his might.'

The spontaneous applause that at once shook the walls was due in part to enthusiasm for Charley Starr. Most of the noise, however, was caused by the exuberant joy of being allowed, for once, to make as much racket as one could within the sacred precincts of Room H. Every one set to work to blister his hands; every one but Theodora, who sat with folded arms and with burning, accusing eyes fixed on Miss Prawl. Holding up her hand for silence, Miss Prawl, with an inexplicable sinking of heart, said, —

'Well, Theodora?'

Theodora rose, white-lipped.

'Miss Prawl, if I'd disobeyed my parents, or stolen out when they did n't know it, *I* might have come to school and had a purple star. I was n't scared. *I* wanted to come. I *prayed* to come.' She knew this last statement would have to be lived down later, but at this hazardous moment, she cared not for that. 'I'd have walked till I died, if they'd let me.'

Before she had time to sit down again, an unexpected adherent suddenly sprang to his feet in the person of Freddy Beal, the class dunce.

'So would I!' shouted Freddy, desirous to support the distinguished Theodora, and at the same time to win a little unaccustomed prominence for himself. 'They caught me just as I was shinnying over the back fence, and they had to lock *me* up to keep me home. I ain't "gone" on school, but it would have been fun to come *that* day! It

was the only day I ever wanted to come to school. Charley Starr had n't ought to get no purple star. That stunt of his wa'n't brav'ry.'

The greatest and the least having been heard from, every one in the class then felt called upon to rise up and say that his soul had been sick within him because he was not permitted to come to school the first day of the blizzard. Miss Prawl was devoutly wishing that she had abolished the purple star before such zealots as the critical Theodora and her followers had darkened the door of Room H, when, as if drawn into the discussion by Fate, Mr. Wadsmore entered, with a brilliant smile for the class and a rather serious look for Miss Prawl. He handed her a note, and said mysteriously, —

'From an I. P. And I'm afraid I think he's right.'

To the great delight of everyone, Mr. Wadsmore turned to the class, and joked about an impossible, prehistoric period when *he* was a small boy, — he now weighed nearly two hundred, — while Miss Prawl, with damask cheeks and too brilliant eyes read the note from the Irate Parent. This note was written with violet ink on heavily perfumed paper with a gold coat of arms and a gold border, and it read: —

936 Clinton Avenue

My dear Mr. Wadsmore, —

On close questioning, I find that my son Charles was actuated in his dare-devil adventure of leaving for school at six-thirty o'clock on the first morning of the blizzard by a desire to win a purple-chalk star. He knows that he very nearly lost his life, and he is hoping that his rash act may be rewarded in the foolish way I mentioned above. He considers that he is a hero, unappreciated at home, and he is working himself into a fever over the whole thing.

I am a plain man [Miss Prawl's eyes wandered to the

coat of arms] and I greatly disapprove of such methods in education. Unless you can do away with your purple-star system immediately, I shall be obliged to transfer Charles to another private school which is nearer, and therefore more convenient.

Awaiting your reply, I am

Very truly yours,

CHARLES AUGUSTUS STARR.

Miss Prawl read the note in a flash, snatched up the eraser, rubbed out the purple star, opened the chalk box, and dropped the purple chalk in the wastebasket.

'What Theodora said about the purple star is quite true,' she said, soberly. 'And I shall never give any one a purple star. Never!'

As Mr. Wadsmore left the room with an approving smile at Miss Prawl, Theodora's eyes grew soft and bright, and she sighed with pathetic relief. For the first time since she had heard of the purple star, the world seemed altogether right.

RUGGS — R.O.T.C.

BY WILLIAM ADDLEMAN GANOE

I

It was only because it was the middle of the night that the barracks of Company Number 1 lay quiet. Even at that solitary hour the squares of moonlight from its sliding windows revealed two long huddled rows of Gold Medal cots creaking with the turnings of one hundred and sixty restless sleepers.

Down toward the end of Squad 15, Joseph Morley Ruggs lay wrapped in dreams more troubled than was his wont. The 'Meter' was standing before him, writing with a feathered sword in a giant book, 'Thou art weighed in the balance and *found* —' The words kept spreading until the *d* was crushed against the edge of the page. The Meter's eyes became flaming nozzles, which shot waves of gas into Ruggs's unmasked face. There was a crashing sound of many bands, playing mostly upon cymbals.

All at once the 'U.S.' on the Meter's collar and the silver bars on his shoulders became incandescent, his body lengthened out like Aladdin's genie, and he slowly disappeared upward in a whirl of smoke, mounted on the shaft of a rifle grenade — and Ruggs was left alone, holding in his hand a rectangular parchment headed, 'Honorable Discharge from the service of the United States.'

When he raised his head Alice, with sorrowful eyes, was looking him through and through — Alice, whom he had left a month before with the trembling words of acquiescence on her lips and a kiss of hope at his departure. There

she stood, shaking a finger of scorn at the paper of Failure in his hand.

The earth was giving way under him. As he sank lower and lower, voices grew abundant about him; and there arose a continuous clatter of rifle-bolts, bayonets, and mess-tins. A bugle somewhere was sounding the assembly. The company in the dusky distance was falling in under arms; the corporals were about to report, and he, Candidate Ruggs, would be absent.

He tried to hurry over dressing himself; but his arms worked in jerks, and when he attempted to run, his legs merely pulled and pushed back and forth heavily in one spot. Frantically he struggled to make headway against the solid air, but in vain. With a supreme effort he lunged forward — and came down at the side of his cot on both feet, with a resounding shock that made the boards of the flimsy barracks rattle.

'For Gawd's sake,' growled the Duke of Squad 15, rising on his elbow, 'don't you get enough settin'-up stuff in the daytime without jarrin' your muscles when decent folks sleep?'

'Who fell into the trench?' inquired Naughty, his legal mind going to the bottom of the matter.

'No use tryin' to sleep around here,' continued the Duke with a groan. 'Got to get a pass and lock yourself in a hotel over Saturday and Sunday.'

Some one in the middle of barracks was attempting to search out with a pocket-flash the cause of the excitement.

'Use of — star — shells — specially successful —'gainst active enemy — in No Man's Land,' droned the great voice of small Squirmy in a far corner.

And the disturbance subsided with several chuckles, allowing Ruggs to dispose himself upon his rumpled sheets without further fire upon him.

In the morning, as he stood in ranks at reveille, he was secretly relieved to note the Meter's normal appearance, and his life-sized pencil, though that active instrument was spelling out death to some career possibly at that moment. Degradation to the name of Ruggs had not yet come; the chance to be included among the commissioned few at the end of camp lay before him as a possibility.

He was wakened smartly from his musings. 'Dress up, put up your arm! you still asleep?'

The Duke, who had been a sergeant in the National Guard for six years, realized that, since the Meter was near at hand, it was a fortunate time to make penetrating corrections. The awe and respect which had bestowed on him the name of Duke on account of his knowledge of the rudiments, were now, in the squad over which he had tyrannized as acting corporal, beginning to wane.

Ruggs put up his arm, every bristling hair of his mouse-colored head erect with fury. It was difficult for a man fifteen years out of college, who had by dint of energy and foresight worked his way to the superintendency of one of the largest banking houses in the East, to take orders from a grocery clerk much younger and of slight education. 'Every kind of military communication should be impersonal.' These words of the Meter came to him opportunely. He fastened his mind on the details for the following day which the first sergeant was then reading out, and was rewarded.

'For company commander to-morrow — Ruggs!'

'He-re!' His voice came all cracked and husky.

'You'd better get onto those drill regs and get up that company stuff,' admonished the Duke at breakfast. 'I always find I can get along better after givin' it a once-over, no matter how well I know it.'

Ruggs made no reply. He was lost in the thought of the

chance he had waited for through thirty-five days of slavery. His opportunity had come.

It was a red-letter day because of another circumstance. For the first time he had been called by name by the Meter at the morning conference.

The elation was so great that, when a note from Alice in the noon mail told him that she would spend the week-end near the camp, he had only time to reflect on what joy his success in handling the company would bring her. Every spare minute during the afternoon and evening he concentrated on close-order drill. Not satisfied with the snatches thus taken, he disappeared after taps, with his books and a small improvised stool, into the lavatory, where there was still a faint light from two badly arranged bulbs. There he delved into combat work and reviewed the company drill. It was one o'clock before he crawled dizzily into bed, with reveille before him at five-thirty.

He woke at five with a start. This was the day of his trial. Although he had stood at the head of ventures involving millions, no day of his life had seemed to him so full of hazard. The fact that he had made good in civil life, he understood, meant nothing in his favor in a military way. For only the previous week Cyrus Long, an industrial manager, with a salary of fifteen thousand a year, had been told plainly by the Meter that he could not make good. And Cy had left with the first failure of a lifetime in his wake.

When Ruggs, making every inch of his five feet eleven count as the Meter approached, commanded 'Company, attention!' his accent was very unlike the ideal one he had planned to use. He noted the men in ranks eyeing him as much as to say, 'Well, how are you going to handle us this morning?'

'Give the company ten minutes' close-order drill, after

which proceed with fifteen minutes of extended order under battle conditions.'

The Meter shot the words out in two definite explosions.

It was the first time that such instructions had been issued, but Ruggs asked no questions.

'Squads right!' he sang out (meaning secretly squads left); then added, 'March!' in a surprised and subdued tone that he had not intended.

On the whole the first of the drill went along fairly well, except that at times some of the men were unable to hear his commands, and *he* knew that *they* knew that he continually meant *right* when he said *left*, and vice versa — which did not add to his authority. But he was too honest to 'bluff' the matter before the Meter, each time admitting the error by a loud 'As you were!' and setting them straight without delay.

When the extended order part of the drill began, he inadvertently made his deployment so that one flank fanned out across the commanding officer's lawn.

'Halt your company!' roared the Meter. 'Company commander report here!'

Ruggs yelled a demoralized 'Halt!' and ran to the captain.

'Who's in command of this company?'

'I am, sir.'

'It does n't appear so; or possibly you wanted them to dance over the colonel's lawn?'

'No, sir.'

'Then why did you put them there?'

'I did n't mean to, sir.'

'You did n't mean *not* to, did you?'

'No, sir.'

'You lead your command out over a fire-swept zone, and after it is decimated, you make a report that you did n't

mean to place it there. How will that look when the dead are counted?'

'Not very well, sir.

'Go place your company where it belongs.'

Ruggs saluted and ran toward the centre of the line, yelling at the top of his lungs, 'Assemble, *assemble*, ASSEMBLE *over here!*'

'Come back!' shouted the Meter.

But Ruggs was so intent on gathering up the tramplers of the colonel's lawn that he did not hear.

'Company commander — Mr. Ruggs!' repeated the Meter, putting all his power against his diaphragm.

Ruggs returned, his thick chest heaving, his hair matted, and a drop of perspiration clinging to the end of his big Roman nose.

'How was this drill to be conducted?' snapped his torturer.

'Under battle conditions, sir.'

'Do you suppose that the company stretched over a space of two hundred yards, while the barrage fire was going on, could hear such caterwauling as you've been attempting? What should you do?'

'Use whistle and signal, sir.'

'Have I not directed you to do so heretofore?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Either malicious or wooden — take your choice! Proceed with your drill.'

Cut to the quick, Ruggs thought hard what to do in his predicament. The studious, sleepless night was beginning to tell on him, but he called to his memory the signal for 'Assemble' and blew a stout blast on his whistle. He felt the Meter behind his back making damaging notes in the book, and the glances of his fellows before him betraying pity and superiority. The number of errors increased with

the length of the drill. Each time the Meter summoned him, the criticisms were more caustic. At last he waved his arms in unknown combinations and directions. But whenever the Meter stopped him, he was able, with much teeth-gritting that made his jaw muscles swell his cheeks, to set the movement straight without excitement.

In the afternoon, during a march along the road, the Meter directed the company to be halted and its commander to report to him.

'Mr. Ruggs, you see that little bluff about four hundred yards to the left of this road?'

'Yes, sir.'

'You have been marching along here as the advance party to your advance guard, when suddenly you receive a burst of fire from that bluff, which you estimate to be directed by about a platoon. What do you do?'

'I'd tell them to —'

'I did n't ask you what you'd tell. I asked you what you'd do.'

'I'd put them, sir —'

'Put who?'

'I'd put the company —'

'You speak of the company as if it were a bird-cage or a jack-knife.'

'Sir, I just wanted —'

'I just asked you what YOU would do — do you get it?'

By this time Ruggs was so aroused that every fibre of his mind was alert. Instead of being more confused, he was able to concentrate more acutely than before. He pulled his whistle from his pocket and blew it almost in the Meter's face, at the same time signaling to the company to deploy and lie down.

'That will do,' snorted the Meter. 'March your company back to barracks!'

Ruggs replaced his whistle in his pocket in a hang-dog way which showed that he was convinced that his doom was sealed.

'Squads right!' he commanded. 'As you were! I mean, squads left! — Oh, steady! Squads right about! March!'

The company, at route step, had become a ripple of mirth from end to end.

'O Ruggsie!' shouted the Duke, 'I know a good civilian tailor!'

The remark brought on a quantity of local laughter, and Naughty did not help matters much by starting, 'Keep the home fires burning.'

That evening the flank of Company Number 1 individually condoled with Ruggs, who was trying to decipher how he could be so full of so many different kinds of mistakes.

'He's got the raspberry all right,' commented the Duke, before a large group, including Ruggs.

The 'raspberry,' be it said, was the name applied to the Sword of Damocles suspended by the Meter. When he called a failing candidate into the orderly room and implied that a resignation would be in order, that lost soul was known the company over as 'getting the raspberry,' or 'rasp.'

II

Just before taps, after life had become subdued through study, the small red-headed form of Squirmy was observed making its way to the centre of the long room. He was dressed in a black overcoat fished from the bottom of a trunk. A white tie torn from a stricken sheet made a flaring bow at his neck, and goggles and an old cap-cover served as headgear. He carried in his hand a Webster's

Unabridged, which he placed on an old box previously used for the same purpose.

'*St!* The Exhorter of Squad 21!' came in whispers from a dozen throats; and the room became still.

Squirmy searched his half-dressed congregation witheringly over the tops of his spectacles. Then from his small body proceeded slow tones of thunder, —

'And the Lord said unto Moses, "Squads right!" (Dramatic pause.)

'But Moses — not being a military man — commanded, "Squads left!" (Longer pause.)

'And great — was the confusion — among the candidates.

'Peace be with you,' he concluded, pointing an accusing finger at Ruggs; and the company went to bed holding their abdomens.

After the last drill on Saturday Alice arrived with her machine, chauffeur, and chaperone. When she spied Ruggs across the parade, with twenty-two pounds of office flabbiness gone, his hardened muscles holding his shoulders and neck erect underneath his khaki, an unmistakable admiration filled her wide hazel eyes.

For a moment his gladness was unalloyed, and the disappointments of crowded barracks and tangled drills faded utterly away. But as the day wore on, the pleasure grew limp in the face of the bleak future. His mind was repeatedly met with the question, 'Shall I tell her?' and he always turned on himself with the reply, 'I am not yet through.'

The unacknowledged dullness between them finally drove them into the distraction of a movie theatre. There, in the darkness, she caught stealthy glimpses of his tightened jaw and distressed face.

'It's going to be very hard on him; he'll be so disappointed,' she said to herself.

At the same time, while apparently following the antics of Mary Pickford, he was thinking, 'It's going to be so hard on her! She'll be so disappointed in me!'

When she had gone, and he found himself once more seated on his bunk in desolation, he berated himself violently: —

'I must have treated her badly. This will not do. I've never given up before. I've got to pull myself up to my best if it 's only a corporal's job. It's better to be a *man* than a higher-up anyway. Good God, I can serve better by going where I'm put than where I want to *be put!* True patriotism, after all, is filling the niche, whatever —'

'Say, Ruggsie,' burst in the Duke from the side door, 'big doin's here Monday. Big review for a Russian general. This company is goin' to be divided into two — A and B companies.'

Ruggsie was silent.

'Don't you care anything about it?' continued the Duke.

'I'm not interested in reviews — to be frank.'

'Say, old fellow, you don't need to get so down because you tied up that drill the other day. Course, there's a great deal to know about this military game. At first I was pretty green myself. May be in a second camp you can get onto the stuff.'

Ruggs was not desirous of discussing the matter with the Duke, who, having been given the natural opportunity, filled the gap with conversation.

'You know the Meter called me and that Reserve Lieutenant Sullivan into the orderly room and told us we were goin' to be in command of the two companies. He went over with us just how we were goin' to do. He's a first-rate chap — the Meter is. First we line up along the road

near the gate, and then we march to the parade-ground and review. I know every command I'm goin' to give right down in order — could say 'em off backwards. That's the way to know your drill.'

At supper the Duke leaned over the table toward Vance, a broker from Wall Street who had spent the previous summer at Plattsburg, and observed confidentially, —

'Do you know, Vance, I'd like to have you as my first lieutenant when I'm a captain. You suit me O.K. I like the way you drill.'

Vance, immaculately neat and clean-shaven, acknowledged the remark with a bow and went on eating. Mortimer, just out of Dartmouth, aged twenty-two, gazed at the Duke with that deference with which Gareth first looked upon Lancelot.

At three o'clock Monday afternoon the twenty companies of the training camp were drawn up ready to display themselves to the Russian general. Automobiles were parked thickly on the roadways, making a black, gray, and brown banded circle around the parade-ground. Under the dense fringe of trees, the many-colored gowns of the women edged the green like a thick hedge of sweet peas. The heat and stillness had settled down over the camp tensely.

The dignitary, eagerly awaited, was overdue. The Duke, as he wiped the perspiration from his hat-band in front of the long column of companies standing at ease, congratulated himself on the certainty with which he would give the appropriate commands at various points before him on the level stretch of grass. Conscious fingering of his pistol-holster indicated his belief in the Meter's choice.

A half-hour passed and the general had not arrived. All at once, the band, contrary to plan, started to move diagonally across the parade-ground. A mounted orderly

popped out from a group of regular officers and galloped straight toward the Duke.

'The major's compliments,' he announced. 'The ceremony along the road-side will be dispensed with. You are to march your company to the line for review at once, sir.'

The field music struck up adjutant's call, which was the signal for the first company to form line.

'Squads left!' shouted the Duke in most military fashion.

It was the command that he had rehearsed to start the company from the roadway to the ceremony proper — the opposite direction from the one toward the spot where the line should now be formed.

'March!' he added, without seeing his error. And the company wheeled off toward the woods away from the visitors, away from the band, away from everybody.

'Damn me!' he muttered, looking back over his shoulder at the vanishing goal. Then he roared, 'Column left! March!'

Again he had steered the head of the column in an opposite direction from the one intended. B and C companies were now directly between his objective and his organization, which was marching farther away with every step. He realized that he had taken time enough to be well on the way toward, instead of away from, the spot where the adjutant was waiting for him.

'Squadsleftmarch!' he bellowed desperately.

The company, in the shape of an L, not having completed the turn in column, now accordioned its flanks toward each other, intermingling inextricably. The organization became at once a crowd of fellows with rifles.

'Halt! Halt! Halt!' the Duke exploded; and immediately fell into helpless bewilderment.

There was a dreadful pause, during which beads of perspiration dropped from his face, making black spots on his

starched clothing. His arm and fingers twitched and he blinked horribly.

'What a steadying influence he'll have on Vance!' whispered some one near Ruggs, who, through compassion, was unable to feel mirthful.

The same orderly galloped up for the second time and delivered an ultimatum from the major in no uncertain language. Several platoon leaders sprang forward and succeeded in getting the company started in the right direction. But the strain had weakened the Duke's nerve to such an extent that he was slow in dressing his company and failed to give 'Eyes right' in time, when actually passing in review under the scrutiny of the general himself.

And all this time the Meter had been hovering about, using his eyes mightily and his mouth not at all.

Back in barracks when ranks were broken, there were no remarks made openly on the leadership of the Duke. He had been a trusty drill-master and, it was reported, had a 'stand-in' with the Meter. It was not discreet to taunt him.

Indeed, it had been such a soakingly hot proceeding — the whole review — that most of the men were glad enough to grasp what little comfort they could without more ado. The extra marching beforehand had not helped to cool them off, mentally or physically. Under the single thin roof that separated them from the sun, the atmosphere, besides being hot, was excessively oppressive. As soon as they could get rid of their rifles, belts, and coats, they tossed them away in any direction. Those who arrived inside first, and consequently had a chance for the shower-bath, peeled off every soggy garment.

They were in this chaotic state of dishabille when a cry rose from the first squad, 'Man the port-holes!' Immedi-

ately one hundred and sixty male beings struggled for a view from the eastern windows.

'It's the general — the whole party!' exclaimed one of the first.

'They're coming in here,' volunteered another.

The crowd surged back and the voice of the acting first sergeant could be heard in an effort to prepare the company for inspection. They hurled their belongings into place with the speed and accuracy of postal clerks. Two nude unfortunates were without ceremony ejected into the cold world on the side of barracks farthest from the Russian advance. History does not record what ever became of them. A bather clad only in a scant towel and a scanter piece of soap, while making his entrance from the shower where he had splashed in ignorance of the coming invasion, was, to his amazement and resentment, forced suddenly into the lavatory, where, he was given to understand, he must remain. Ruggs, most incompletely dressed, coiled himself up underneath his cot behind two lusty suitcases.

When the general came down the aisle, the candidates standing fully clad at the foot of their bunks, at 'attention,' gave the impression of having waited for him nonchalantly in that position ever since the review. Mattress-covers were smoothed, bedding folded, clothing hung neatly, and all evidence of hurry or confusion effaced.

But the Meter smiled a Mona Lisa smile as the door closed upon generals, colonels, aides-de-camp, and himself.

'Rest,' shouted the acting first sergeant, and the company collapsed into tumultuous laughter. Wet underclothing, matches, and cigarettes, were hauled from beneath mattresses, equipment from behind pillows, and knick-knacks from yawning shoe-tops.

In the midst of all this turmoil one of the doors reopened and the Meter stepped inside. Some one near him mur-

mured a half-hearted 'Attention!' and all who were within earshot arose — all except one. At that moment Ruggs found himself halfway up from between the cots, his head and body upright and his legs fast asleep under him.

'Mr. Ruggs, I seem to see more of you than I did a moment ago.'

If the Meter had returned for a purpose, all idea of it vanished now, for he turned and disappeared, leaving Ruggs to bear his chagrin and to blush down as far as his legs.

That night Squirmy took his text from the book of Currussians, and gave a splendid and inspiriting talk on how Moses, although he had been found by the King's daughter in the bulrushes, had nothing on Ruggs, who was discovered by the King himself among the valises. 'And be it said,' concluded the exhorter, 'that both foundlings wore the same uniform.'

III

The first of August was close at hand. Rumors kept coming up like the dawn 'on the road to Mandalay.' The 'makes' (those recommended for commissions), it was said, had already had their names sent to Washington. Before and after drills, members of the company were being constantly summoned into the orderly room for interviews, the purport of which was leaking out through the camp. A reserve captain had been given his walking papers. Squirmy was to be a second lieutenant; Naughty, a first lieutenant; and Vance, a captain.

The Duke had just been summoned. As he made his way up the aisle to the front of barracks, hushed whispers ran around from circle to circle: 'Will he get a captaincy or just a lieutenancy out of it?' And many a covetous eye followed his retreating figure.

At dinner he had not returned. In the afternoon and during the next day his place in the squad was vacant. It began to be rumored that he had been sent away on some special detail, perhaps to France.

In the evening Ruggs, having finished his supper early, was surprised to find the Duke in civilian attire sitting on the cot he had occupied, which was now divested of all its former accompaniments.

'Good-bye,' began the Duke, extending a cold hand rather ungraciously. 'Jus' turned in all my stuff.'

'Leaving?' queried Ruggs.

'Yep, got the rasp all right!'

There was an awkward pause, which was filled by the Duke's interest in the lock of his suitcase, after which he continued haltingly, —

'Meter called me in and told me no use to stay here — said my experience was all right — but because I'd had so much, he expected more. Told me any man that got fussed up and could n't get out of an easy hole without help after six years' trainin' was no good for leadin' men. Said he could n't trust men's lives to me, and so he could n't give me a commission. Gave me a lot of guff like that, with no sense to it. He's a hell of a man!'

'Do you mean to say you're discharged — and that's all?' Ruggs was plainly astounded.

'You bet; that's the end of the little Duke of Squad 15. Be good to yourself. Say good-bye to the fellows for me, will you?'

Several men strolled back from supper. The Duke casting a furtive glance in their direction as much as to say, 'I don't care to meet any of them any more,' added a 'So long,' and disappeared, suitcase in hand, through the side door.

'What chance for me,' thought Ruggs, 'if the Duke gets the raspberry?'

That night he carefully smoothed out a civilian suit and placed it on a hanger at the head of his cot. He also wrote several letters to business friends at home. He did not write to Alice.

Excitement for the next few days was severe. Some were not eating their meals, few were sleeping much, and all were stale. The physical training had truly been intensive, but the mental strain had been breaking. Friends greeted each other in a preoccupied way, and the nightly singing had grown feeble.

As for Ruggs, he looked forward to the acceptance of his discharge with as much grace as possible. He had striven honestly, and had apparently made of himself only an object for laughter, but he was far from giving up. Several candidates had confided to him their disappointment, as they would have liked, they said, to see him gain a commission. Indeed they had felt all along that he was going to make good.

Yet the day of his reckoning seemed never to materialize. Men went into the orderly room, and came out with hectic smiles of relief or sickly efforts at cheerfulness, while he watched and waited.

One day, after the first drill, Vance was sitting on his bunk talking finances, when a voice from the other end of the barracks called out, —

'The following men report in the orderly room at once!'

The silence was crisp. Then the voice continued with a list of about ten names, toward the end of which was Ruggs.

'Good-bye, Vance,' said he, rising. He put on his coat and brushed his clothing and shoes carefully.

Vance eyed him narrowly and pityingly during the opera-

tion, as much as to say, 'There's no use taking any more pains with those clothes; you'll never need them again.'

Ruggs caught the look and understood.

'You see I can't get out of the habit,' he confessed. 'It's not so much the clothes as — as — myself.'

At the orderly room door he waited a small eternity before his name was called.

Once inside he found himself for the first time alone with the Meter. Under his scrutiny heretofore Ruggs had felt himself to be merely number one of the rear rank needful of correction. And yet the victim felt that he could part from the captain with no feeling of resentment at the blow he was about to receive.

'Mr. Ruggs!'

The Estimator of Destinies wheeled in his chair and cast a look of brotherly frankness into Ruggs's eyes.

'Yes, sir.'

'Mr. Ruggs, you've been here almost three months.'

'Yes, sir.'

'I have n't time to mince matters with you. You have one great failing which I'm going to dwell upon. You attempt to do too many things at once. In the military service you are compelled to consider what is best for the moment. Nothing changes so fast or furiously as a military situation. Don't forecast what you'll do next so much as figure what you'll do *now*. Make your men be of the greatest use in the team right *now* — understand? What you'd be liable to do would be a certain amount of banking in the trenches. While you'd be speculating on how much interest your venture would bring you to-morrow, a gas wave comes over to-day and finds your men without masks. Be ready for the thing at issue. You've got to take this matter in hand at once and overcome it.'

Ruggs acknowledged to himself that his difficulties were all too plainly exposed. He had tried to compass the whole of drill regulations in a single night. He had been so interested in what he was going to do to the enemy after he reached the bluff, that he had forgotten to give the proper signals to start the company on its mission. If only he had understood the correct method of approach at the beginning!

'That,' went on the Meter, as if in continuation of Ruggs's thoughts, 'has been your downfall.'

There was a knock at the door. In answer to the captain's 'Come in,' a thick official document was handed him.

'Be seated, Mr. Ruggs. Pardon me while I read this!'

It took some time for the perusal, during which Ruggs saw light in the shape of a new plan.

'Captain,' he inquired, as the Meter looked up, 'is there any chance for me to get into another camp or couldn't you recommend me?'

'Second camp!' cried the Meter, staring at Ruggs as if the candidate were bereft of reason. 'Second camp! You'll get all the second camp that's coming to you. The whole purpose of this camp is to pick out the proper woodpulp — that's all. None of you is capable of being an officer now; but the men I've chosen, I hope have the makings. You yourself have two assets: first, a knowledge of men, and second, the power to think under stress. In another month you'll be training rookies from the draft. What I wanted to tell you was, you'd better look out for your failing when you're the first lieutenant, instead of the captain, of that company of yours. Do you understand?'

Ruggs understood and managed to retire. Once outside, he leaned against the building to steady his knees,

and pressed his hands into his pockets to keep his fingers from trembling.

'Sorry about it, old chap!' spoke up one of those waiting near the entry.

Ruggs realized how the shock must have affected his features. The incident gave him an idea.

When he had recovered sufficiently to go back to his bunk, Vance, in a rather conventional and perfunctory tone, inquired about the outcome.

'Oh,' the dissembling Ruggs declared, 'the Meter said he'd let me stay on till the end of camp for the training I'd get, if I wanted to.'

It was enough for Vance, and those standing about refrained from asking embarrassing questions. For the next four days Ruggs was treated as one who has just lost his entire family in a wreck. On the evening of the fifth day, after supper, a reserve officer from headquarters appeared in barracks with a list, the substance of which he said could be disclosed to the public. When he had finished reading the first lieutenants every eye glared at Ruggs; and when the list was completed there was a rush for blankets and the victim. How many times Ruggs's feet hit the ceiling, he never quite remembered.

Later, Squirmy gave a very helpful talk on Joseph, who was sold by his brothers down into Egypt after they had hidden him under a bushel. 'Ah! gentlemen,' he exhorted, '*this* time little Joey sold his brothers. Little Joey Ruggs is going to have a coat of many colors and be ruler over many!'

And again the fun turned on Ruggs, but he stole away and wired Alice.

THE WAY OF LIFE

BY LUCY HUFFAKER

THERE was a heavy odor in the little house which quite blighted the soft spring air as it blew in through the half-open window. For supper there had been onions and sausage, and the fried potatoes had burned. The smells which had risen from the kitchen stove had mingled with the raw, soapy fumes which gave testimony that Monday was wash-day in the Black family. Now the smoking of the kerosene lamp on the centre-table seemed to seal in hermetical fashion the oppressive room against the gentle breeze of the May evening.

The woman, bending over a pair of trousers which she was patching, stuck the needle in the cloth, pulled the thimble from her fat, red finger, and rubbed her hands over her eyes.

'Bed-time, Billy,' she said to the nine-year-old boy who was playing with a picture-puzzle on the other side of the table.

'Aw, ma, let me stay up, till pa and the boys get home.'

The woman shook her head.

'I'll get up in plenty of time to feed the chickens, anyhow. Honest, I will.'

'You ought to be glad to go to bed,' the mother sighed in answer. 'I'd be. Seems to me I'd be tickled to death if I could drop into bed without my supper any night.'

'I'll go if you 'll go, too. I just hate to go to bed knowing all the rest of you are up.'

'Me go to bed! Why these trousers of yours are n't finished yet and I've got to mend Tom's shirt and your

father's coat, and then there's the bread to set. Much chance I have to go to bed for a couple of hours, yet! Now you run along. If you go like a good boy, you can have a cooky.'

She put the thimble on her finger and bent over her mending again. She sewed steadily on until an hour later, when she heard the buggy drive into the yard and one of the boys came running in to ask her if she knew where the barn-lantern was. It was in the cellar, and there was barely enough oil to make a dim light while the horse was being unharnessed. The boys were sent to bed immediately, with an injunction to be quiet so Billy would not be awakened. She heard the heavy tread of her husband in the kitchen, as he hunted for the dipper to get a drink of water. Then he came into the sitting-room, sat down in a chair, and began pulling off his shoes. He groaned as he did it.

'Say, Em,' he said, 'guess who I saw in town tonight?'

'Who?' was the unimaginative response.

'You'd never guess in a hundred years. You'd never guess what she did, either. She sent you these.'

He drew from his pocket a package and a sheet of notepaper. The woman looked at them for a moment, but she did n't touch them.

'Hurry up, Em,' said the man. 'They won't bite you.'

'But what — ' she faltered.

'The best way to find out about 'em is to open 'em.'

She opened the package first. It was a cheap colored print of St. Cecilia at the Organ. It was in a bright gilt frame. Then she opened the note. She read it through once, with a little frown puckering her forehead. Then, more slowly, she read it the second time.

'Minnie Jackson!' she murmured. ' I have n't seen her for nearly ten years. I don't know when I've thought about her, even. You read it, Jake?'

'Yes. She did n't seal it.' He waited a minute, then said, 'I could n't just make out what it was all about. What day is this?'

'It's our birthday — Minnie's and mine. We used to call ourselves twins, but she's a year older than I am. I've been so busy all day I never thought about it. What does Minnie look like?'

'Oh, she looks about the same, I guess, as the last time she was home. She's getting fatter, though. Guess the climate out in California must agree with her.'

'Is she as fat as I am?'

'Just about, I guess.'

'Did she look as if they were well off? What kind of a dress did she have on?'

'I don't know. Good enough, I guess. I did n't see anything wrong with it. While she ran into the store to get this picture and write this note to you, old Jackson was bragging to me about how well Elmer had done. He said Min had married about as well as any girl round here.'

'Did he say anything about whether she ever paints any?'

'Paints? What ever are you talking about, Em?'

She had bent over her sewing again, and he could not see her face as she answered, 'When Minnie and I were little girls, I reckon we never had any secrets from each other, at all. I know I talked about things to her I never could have told anybody else. She was that way with me, too. Well, she always said she wanted to paint, and I wanted to play. She was always copying every picture she saw. I remember she did one picture called A yard of Roses, from a calendar. It was so good you couldn't have told the difference. Don't you remember the time she took the prize at the art exhibit at the country fair, with a picture she had copied, called The Storm? One of the

judges said it just made him shiver to look at it, it was so real.'

'Come to think of it, I believe I do recollect something about Min having queer notions. I know us boys used to think she was stuck-up. What did she mean about the vow and about this picture being of you, by her?'

For a moment there was only the little click of her thimble against the needle. Then she said, 'I guess I can't make it clear to you, Jake. Minnie always did have her own way of putting things. We had lots of fancies, as we used to call them. But I suppose she was thinking about our old dreams. If they'd come true, she might have painted me, sitting like that.'

'It don't look much like you, even when you was young,' was the reply of the man, not given to 'fancies'; 'but what is it about the vow?'

'I don't know,' said his wife shortly.

It was one of the few lies she had ever told her husband. Just why, having told him so much, she could n't tell him that Minnie Jackson and she had promised each other that, no matter what happened, nothing should keep them from realizing their ambitions, and that each year they would give a report to each other on their birthday, she could not have said. But suddenly her throat contracted and she could not see the patch on the coat.

'How this lamp does smoke!' she said, as she brushed her hand over her eyes.

'Well,' yawned her husband, 'I guess most folks, leastwise most girls, have silly notions when they're young. Who'd ever think to see you now, that you ever had any such ideas? You're a good wife for a farmer, Em. There ain't a better woman anywhere, than you.'

It was one of the few times in all the years of their marriage that he had praised her. Jacob Black had never been

one to question life or to marvel at its wonders. For him, it held no wonders. The spell of life had caught him when he was young. He had 'fallen in love' with Emmeline Mead and he had married her. She had borne him eight children. Five of them had lived. If Jacob Black had thought about it at all, which he did not, he would have said that was the way life went. One was young. Then one grew old. When one was young, one married, and probably there were children.

The wing of romance had brushed him so lightly in its passing, that at the time it had brought to him no yearning for an unknown rapture, no wonder at the mystery of life. After twenty-one years, if he had given it any thought whatsoever, he would have said that their marriage 'had turned out well.' Em had been a good wife; she had risen at daylight and worked until after dark. She was n't foolish about money. She never went to town unless there was something to take her there. She went to church, of course, and when it was her turn, she entertained the Ladies' Aid. Such recreations were to be expected. Yes, Em had been a good wife. But then, he had been a good husband. He never drank. He was a church member. He always hired a woman to do the housework, for two weeks, when there was a new baby. He let Em have the butter and chicken money.

The clock struck nine.

'I'm going to bed,' he said, 'there's lots to do to-morrow. Nearly through your mending?'

'No. Anyhow, I guess I'll wait up for John and Victoria to come home.'

'Better not, if you're tired. John may get in early, but probably Vic will be mooning along.'

'What?' she cried. 'What do you mean by that, Jake Black?'

'Say, Em, are you blind? Can't you see there's something between her and Jim? Have n't you noticed that it is n't John he comes to see now? Have n't you seen how Vic spruces up nights when he's coming over?'

The woman dropped her sewing in her lap. The needle ran into her thumb. Mechanically, she pulled it out. She was so intent, looking at him, trying to grasp his meaning, that she did not notice the drops of blood which fell on her mending. When she spoke, it was with difficulty.

'O Jake, it can't be. It just can't be.'

'Why can't it?'

'Why, he's not good enough for Victoria.'

'Not good enough? Why, what's the matter with Jim? I never heard a word against him and I've known him ever since he was a little shaver. He's steady as can be, and a hard worker.'

'I know all that. I was n't thinking about such things. I was thinking about — oh, about — other things.'

'Other things? Well, what on earth is the matter with the other things? Forman's place is as good as any hereabouts, and it's clear, and only three children to be divided among. There's money in the bank, too, I'll bet.'

'But Victoria is so young, Jake. Why, she's just a girl!'

'She 's old as you was, when we got married, Em.'

He went into the kitchen for another drink of water. When he came through the room, he bent over to pick up his shoes.

' Say, Em,' he said, 'you surely don't mean what you've been saying, do you, about Jim not being good enough for Vic? 'Cause it ain't likely that she'll ever get another chance as good.'

She did not answer. The man looking at her, the man who had lived with her for more than twenty years, did not know that a sudden rage against life was in her heart. He

did not know that the lost dreams of her youth were crying out in her against the treachery of life. He did not know that the bandage which the years had mercifully bound across her eyes had fallen away, and that she was seeing the everlasting tragedy of the conflict between dreams and life. He did not know that, in that moment, she was facing the supreme sorrow of motherhood in the knowledge that the beloved child cannot be spared the disillusions of the years. He only knew that she was worried.

'Don't you be giving Vic any of your queer notions,' he said, in a voice which was almost harsh.

Jacob Black was an easygoing man. But he had set his heart on seeing his daughter the wife of Jim Forman. Did not the Forman farm join his on the southeast?

Until she heard him walking around in their bedroom overhead, she sewed on. Then she laid down her work. She picked up the picture. It was small, but she held it clutched in both hands, as though it were heavy. It would not have mattered to her if she had known that critics of art scoffed at the picture. To her it was more than a masterpiece; it was a miracle. Had she not felt like the pictured saint, when she had sat at the organ, years ago? She, too, had raised her eyes in just that way; and if actual roses had not fallen on the keys, the mystical ones of hopes too fragile for words, and beauties only dreamed of, had fallen all about her. There was a time when she had played the little organ in church. How her soul had risen on the chords which she struck for the Doxology, which always came just before the benediction! Even after Victoria was born, she had played the organ for a time. Then the babies came fast, and when one has milking to do and dishes to wash and one's fingers are needle-pricked, it is hard to find the keys. Also, when one works from daylight till dark, one wants only rest. There is a sleep too deep for dreams.

It was years since Emmeline Black had dreamed except in the terms of her motherhood. For herself, the dream had gone. She did not rebel. She accepted. It was the way of life with women like her. She would not have said her life was hard. Jacob Black had been a good husband to her. Only a fool, having married a poor farmer, could expect that the dreams of a romantic girl would ever come true. Once she had expected it, of course. That was when Jacob Black had seemed as a prince to Emmeline Mead. She had felt the wing of romance as it brushed past her. But that was long ago. She did not like the routine of her life. But neither did she hate it. For herself, it had come to seem the natural, the expected thing. But for Victoria—

Her dreams had not all gone when Victoria was born. That first year of her marriage, it had seemed like playing at being a housekeeper to do the work for Jacob and herself. She had loved her garden, and often, just because she had loved to be with him and because she loved the smell of the earth and the growing things which came from it, she had gone into the fields with her husband. Then, when the year was almost gone, her baby was born. She had loved the other children as they came, and she had grieved for the girls and the boy who had died; but Victoria was the child of her dreams. The other children had been named for aunts and uncles and grandfathers, and so had satisfied family pride. But that first baby had been named for a queen.

None of the boys cared for music. They 'took after' the Black family. But Victoria, so Emmeline felt, belonged to her. She had always been able to play by ear, and her voice was sweet and true. The butter-and-egg money for a long time had gone for music lessons for Victoria. When the girl was twelve, her mother had begun a secret fund. Every week she pilfered a few pennies from her own small

income and put them away. Some time Victoria was to go to the city and have lessons from the best teacher there. For five years she did not purchase a thing for herself to wear, except now and then a dress pattern of calico. That was no real sacrifice to her. The hard thing was to deny pretty clothes to Victoria.

Then a year of sickness came. She tried to forget the little sum of money hidden away. Surely their father could pay the bills. If she had spent the butter-and-egg money, as he had thought she had done, he would have had to pay them alone. But when the doctor said that Henry must be taken to the county seat for an operation, there was no thought of questioning her duty. Her husband had been surprised and relieved when she gave him her little hoard. It was another proof that he had a good wife, and one who was not foolish about money.

At last, her sewing was finished. She went into the kitchen and began to set the bread. But her thoughts were not on it. She was thinking of Emmeline Mead and her dreams, and how they had failed her. She had expected Victoria Black to redeem those dreams. And now Victoria was to marry and go the same hard way toward drab middle-age. She heard some one step on the front porch. There was a low murmur of voices for a moment and a little half-stifled laugh. Then the door opened.

'Mother, is that you?' came something which sounded half-whisper, half-laugh from the door.

She raised her eyes from the bread-pan. She smiled. But she could not speak. It seemed as if the fingers of some world-large hand had fastened around her heart. To her Victoria had always been the most beautiful, the most wonderful being, on earth. But she had never seen this Victoria before. The girl was standing in the door — eyes

shining, lips trembling, her slim young body swaying as if to some hidden harmony. Then she leaped across the kitchen, and threw her strong arms round her mother.

'I 'm so glad you're up and alone! O mother, I had to see you to-night. I could n't have gone to bed without talking to you. I was thinking it was a blessed thing father always sleeps so hard, for I could tip-toe in and get you and he'd never know the difference.' She stifled a little laugh and went on, 'Come on, outdoors. It is too lovely to stay inside.' She drew her mother, who had not yet spoken, through the door. 'I guess, mother,' she said, as if suddenly shy when the confines of the kitchen were left behind for the star-lighted night, 'that you know what it is, don't you?'

For answer, Emmeline Black sobbed.

'Don't, mother, don't. You must n't mind. Just think how near home I 'll be! Is n't that something to be glad about?'

Her mother nodded her head as she wiped her eyes on her gingham apron.

'I wondered if you saw it coming?' the girlish voice went on. 'You never let on, and the kids never teased me any. So I thought perhaps you told 'em not to. I have n't felt like being teased about Jim, some way. It's been too wonderful, you know.'

Not until that moment did Emmeline Black acknowledge the defeat of her dreams. Wonderful! To love and be loved by Jim Forman, of whom the most that could be said was that he was steady and a hard worker, and that there were only two other children to share his father's farm!

'Don't cry, mother,' implored Victoria, 'though I know why you're doing it. I feel like crying, too, only something won't let me cry to-night. I guess I 'm just too happy ever to cry again.'

Still her mother had not spoken. She had stopped crying and stood twisting her apron with nervous fingers.

'Mother,' said Victoria, suddenly, 'you like Jim, don't you?'

She said it as if the possibility of any one's not liking Jim was preposterous. But, nevertheless, there was anxiety in her voice.

Her mother nodded her head.

'Then why are n't you really glad? I thought you would be, mother.'

There was no resisting that appeal in Victoria's voice. Never in her life had she failed her daughter. Was she to fail her in this hour?

'You seem like a little girl to me, Victoria,' she found voice to say, at last. 'I guess all mothers feel like this when their daughters tell them they are going to leave them. I reckon I never understood until just now, why my mother acted just like she did when I told her your father and I were going to be married.'

Victoria laughed joyously. 'I 'm not a little girl. I 'm a woman. And, mother, Jim is so good. He wants to be married right away. He says he can't bear to think of waiting. But he said I was to tell you that if you could n't spare me for a while, it would be all right.'

There was pride in her lover's generosity. But deeper than that was the woman's pride in the knowledge that he could not 'bear to think of waiting.'

'It is n't that I can't spare you, dear,' said her mother. 'But, O Victoria, I'd wanted to have you go off and study to be a fine musician. I've dreamed of it ever since you were born.'

'But I could n't go even if it was n't for Jim. Where would we ever get the money? Anyway, mother, Jim is going to buy me a piano. What do you think of that?'

'A piano?'

'Yes. He has been saving money for it for years. He says I play too well for an old-fashioned organ. And on our wedding trip we 're going to Chicago, and we 're going to pick it out there, and we 're going to a concert and to a theatre and to some show that has music in it.'

In spite of herself, Emmeline Black was dazzled. In all her life she never had gone to the city except in her dreams. Until that far-off day of magic when Victoria should be a fine musician, she had never hoped to replace the squeaky little organ with a piano.

'He says he has planned it ever since he loved me, and that has been nearly always. He says he can just see me sitting at the piano playing to him nights when he comes in from work. I guess, mother, we all have to have our dreams. And now Jim 's and mine are coming true.'

'Have you always dreamed things, too?' asked her mother.

It did not seem strange to her that she and this beloved child of hers had never talked about the things which were in their hearts until this night. Mothers and daughters were like that. But there was a secret jealousy in knowing that they would not have found the way to those hidden things if it had not been for Jim Forman. It was he, and not she, who had unlocked the secrets of Victoria's heart.

'Why, yes, of course, mother. Don't you remember how you used to ask me what was the matter when I was a little girl, and would go off sometimes by myself and sit and look across the fields? I did n't know how to tell you. I did n't know just what it was. And don 't you remember asking me sometimes if I was sick or if somebody had hurt my feelings, because you 'd see tears in my eyes? I 'd tell you no. But some way I could n't tell you it was because the red of the sunset or the apple trees in blossom or the cres-

cent moon, or whatever it happened to be, made me feel so queer inside.' She laughed, but there was a hint of a sob in her voice. 'Is n't it strange, mother, that we don't seem able to tell folks any of these things? I could n't tell you even now, except that I always had an idea you'd felt just the same way, yourself. I seemed to know I got the dreams from you.'

'Hush,' warned her mother. 'There 's some one coming. Oh, John, is that you?'

'Yes. Why don't you two go to bed?' answered the boy. 'It's getting late, and there's lot to do to-morrow.'

'It is bed-time, I guess,' said his mother. 'Run along, Victoria. And sweet dreams.'

She cautioned John and his sister not to wake the others, as they prepared for bed. She walked into the house. She tried the clock. Yes, Jake had wound it. She locked the door. She folded her mending neatly and put it away. She placed Minnie Jackson's letter in the drawer of the table. She took the picture of St. Cecilia and balanced it on the little shelf above the organ, where had been a china vase with dried grasses in it. She stood off and looked at it critically. She decided that was the very place for the picture. She looked around the room for a place to put the vase, and made room for it on top of the little pine book-case. She walked to the table and hunted in the drawer until she found pen and ink and a piece of ruled paper.

'Dear Minnie,' she wrote in her cramped, old-fashioned hand, 'I was so glad to get your note and the picture. I want to thank you for it. Can't you come out right away and spend the day with me? I have so much to tell you, and I want that you should tell me all about yourself, too. You see I 'm keeping the vow, just as you did, although we had forgotten it for so long. Is n't it strange, Minnie, about things? Here I'd thought for years that my dreams were

gone. And now it seems Victoria had them, all the time. It's a secret yet, but I want to tell you, and I know she won't mind, that Victoria is going to be married. You know Jim Forman, don't you? Anyway, you knew Cy Forman and Milly Davis, and he's their eldest child. I hope Victoria can keep the dreams for herself better than I did. Perhaps she can. She's going to have things easier than I have, I hope. But if she can't, surely she can keep them until she has a child to give them to, just as I gave mine to her. I never thought of it before, but it seems to me to-night that perhaps that is the surest way there is of having our dreams last. I don't see how I 'm going to stand it to see my girl growing fat and tired and old from hard work, like I've done. But there is another side to it. You're a mother, too, Minnie, so I guess I don't need to tell you that all the music and all the pictures in the world would n't make up to me, now, for my children. We did n't know that when we had our "fancies," did we? But we know it now. Come out soon, Minnie. We'll have so much to talk about, and I want that you and Victoria should know each other.'

She folded the paper and slipped it into an envelope which she addressed and stamped. Then she blew out the light.

A YEAR IN A COAL-MINE

BY JOSEPH HUSBAND

Ten days after my graduation from Harvard I took my place as an unskilled workman in one of the largest of the great soft-coal mines that lie in the Middle West. It was with no thought of writing my experiences that I chose my occupation, but with the intention of learning by actual work the 'operating end' of the great industry, in the hope that such practical knowledge as I should acquire would fit me to follow the business successfully. That this mine was operated in direct opposition to the local organization of union labor, and had won considerable notoriety by successfully mining coal in spite of the most active hostility, gave an added interest to the work. The physical conditions of the mine were the most perfect that modern engineering has devised: the 'workings' were entirely electrified; the latest inventions in coal-mining machinery were everywhere employed, and every precaution for the safety of the men was followed beyond the letter of the law.

I

It was half-past six on a July morning when the day-shift began streaming out of the wash-house: some four hundred men, — white, black, and of perhaps twenty-eight nationalities, — dressed in their tattered, black, and greasy mine-clothes. The long stream wound out of the wash-house door, past the power-house where the two big generators that feed the arteries of the great mine all day long with its motive power were screaming in a high, shrill

rhythm of sound, — past the tall skeleton structure of the tipple-tower, from which the light morning breeze blew black clouds of coal-dust as it eddied around the skeleton of structural iron-work, — to a small house at the mine-mouth, sheathed in corrugated iron, where the broken line formed a column, and the men, one by one, passed through a gate by a small window and gave their numbers to a red-faced man, who checked down in a great book the men who were entering the mine.

From the window we passed along to a little inclosure directly above the mouth of the main hoisting-shaft. Sheer above it the black tower of the tipple pointed up into the hot, blue morning sky; and the dull, dry heat of the flat Illinois country seemed to sink down around it. But from the square, black mouth of the shaft a strong, steady blast of cool air struck the faces of the men who stood at the head of the little column waiting for the next hoist. On the one side of the shaft-mouth, long lines of empty railroad cars stretched out beyond into the flat country, each waiting its turn to be filled some time during the day with coal that would come pouring down over the great screens in the tipple; and on the other side of the shaft-mouth, under the seamed roof of the building where the checker wrote down the numbers of the day-shift, sat the hoisting engineer — a scrawny, hard-faced man with a mine-cap pushed back from his forehead.

Beside him was the great drum on which the long steel cables that lifted and lowered the hoisting-cage were rapidly unwinding, and in his hand he held a lever by which he controlled the ascent or descent of the 'cage.' The first cage had been lowered, and as I watched him and the dial before him, I saw his hand follow his eye, and as the white arrow passed the 300-foot level, the hand drew back a notch and the long, lithe wire began to uncoil more slowly. Three

hundred and fifty feet, — and another notch, — and as the arrow reached near the 400-foot mark, his foot came down hard on the brake, and a minute later a bell at his elbow sounded the signal of the safe arrival of the hoist. A minute, and another signal; and then, releasing his foot from the brake, and pulling another lever toward him, the drums, reversed, began to rewind; and as the arrow flew backwards, I realized that the cage was nearing the top — the cage on which a minute later I was to make my descent as a 'loader' into one of the largest, and perhaps most famous, of the vast soft-coal mines that lie in our Middle States.

As the thin cables streamed upward and over the sheave-wheels above the shaft and down to the reeling-drums, I looked at the men about me and felt a sudden mortification at the clean blue of my overalls, and the bright polish on my pick and shovel. A roar at the shaft-mouth, the grind of the drums as the brakes shot in, and the cage lifted itself suddenly from the shaft.

The cage, or elevator, in which the men were lowered into the mine, was a great steel box divided into four superimposed compartments, each holding ten men; and I stood, with nine others, crowded on the first or lowest deck. As the last man pushed into his place and we stood shoulder to shoulder, the hoisting engineer slowly slipped his lever again toward him, and as slowly the cage sank. Then, in an instant, the white-blue of the sky was gone, except for a thin crack below the deck above us, through which a sheet of white light sliced in and hung heavily in the dusty air of our compartment. The high song of the generators in the power-house, the choking puffs of the switch-engine in the yards, and the noise of men and work which I had not noticed before, I now suddenly missed in the absence of sound.

There was a shuffling of feet on the deck above, and again we sank, and this time all was darkness, while we paused for the third deck to fill. Once more — and again for the fourth. Then, as the cage started and the roar of the shoes on the guide-rails struck my ears, I looked at the men about me. They were talking in a whirr of foreign words; and in the greasy yellow light of their pit-lamps, which hung like miniature coffee-pots in the brims of their caps, the strong, hard lines of their faces deepened. The working day was begun.

As the cage shot down, the wall of the shaft seemed to slip up, and from its wet, slimy surface an occasional spatter of mud shot in on the faces of the miners. Strong smells of garlic, of sweat, and of burning oil filled the compartment, and the air, which sucked up through the cracks beneath our feet as though under the force of a piston, fanned and pulled the yellow flames in the men's caps into smoking streaks. Then I felt the speed of the 'hoist' diminish. A pressure came in my ears and I swallowed hard; and a second later, a soft yet abrupt pause in our descent brought me down on my heels. The black wall of the shaft before me suddenly gave way, and we came to a stop on the bottom of the mine.

It was cool, and after the heat of a July morning, the damp freshness of the air chilled me. With dinner-pails banging against our knees, we pushed out of the hoist; and as the men crowded past, I stood with my back against a great timber and looked around me. Behind, the hoist had already sunk into the 'sump' or pit, at the bottom of the shaft, in order that the men on the second compartment might pass out into the mine; and a second later they swarmed by me — and still I stood, half-dazed by the roar of unknown sounds, my eyes blanketed by the absence of light, and my whole mind smothered and crushed.

I was standing just off the main entry or tunnel of the mine, which began on my left hand out of blackness and passed again, on my right, into a seeming wall of darkness. The low, black roof, closely beamed with great timbers, was held by long lines of great whitewashed tree-trunks. A few electric lights shone dimly through their dust-coated globes, and the yellow flames from the men's pit-lamps, which had flared so bright in the compartment of the hoisting-cage, seemed now but thin tongues of flame that marked rather than disclosed the men.

Out of the blackness on the left, two tracks passed over a great pit and stretched on into the blackness on the right, as though into the wall of the coal itself. Then, far off, a red signal-light winked out and made distance visible; and beyond it came the sound of grinding wheels; there was the gleam of a headlight on the steel rails. The ray grew larger and two yellow sparks above it flamed out into pit-lights. A train was coming out of the entry and I waited until it should pass. With a grind of brakes it suddenly loomed out of the blackness and into the dull haze of light at the shaft-bottom. With a roar it passed by. The locomotive, a great iron box, was built like a battering-ram, the headlight set in its armor-plated bow, and behind, on two low seats, as in a racing automobile, sat the motorman and the 'trip-rider' or helper, the motorman with one hand on the great iron brake-wheel, the other on his controller, and the trip-rider swinging on his low seat, half on the motor and half over the coupling of the rocking car behind, clinging to the pole of the trolley. Their faces were black with the coal-dust, — black as the motor and their clothing, — and from their pit-lamps the flames bent back in the wind and streamed out straight along their cap-tops.

Low above the head of the trip-rider, the wheel on the trolley streaked out sudden bursts of greenish-white sparks

along the wire; and as the train passed by, the roar of the locomotive gave place to the clattering of the couplings of the long string of stocky cars, each heaped high with its black load of coal. Some one seized me by the elbow.

'What's yer number?' he asked.

'419.'

'Loader? New man?'

I nodded.

'Then come along with me.'

He was a tall, thin man, who walked with his head thrown forward and his chin against his chest as if in constant fear of striking the low beams overhead. I followed him, stumbling rather clumsily over the broken coal beside the track. The train had come to a stop over the pit between the rails, and men with iron bars were beating loose the frogs and releasing the hopper-bottoms of the cars. Heavy clouds of fine coal-dust poured up from the cars as the coal roared down into the bins; and the clanking of metal, the crash of falling coal, and the unintelligible shouting of the foreigners, filled the entry with a dull tumult of sounds.

Dodging the low trolley-wire which hung about five feet above the rails, we crawled across the coupling between two of the cars to the other side of the entry, and walked to the left, past the locomotive where the motorman was still sitting in his low seat, waiting to pull out his train of empty cars into the sudden darkness of the tunnel beyond. Then, for the first time, I learned that mines are echoless, and that sound — like light — is absorbed by the blotter-like walls of the tunnels.

We walked down the entry between the rails, and after a hundred yards turned with the switch in the track sharply to the right, and again on. Sense of direction or angles was lost, and, like the faces in a foreign race of people, where

one can see little or no individuality, so here, each corner seemed the same, and in a hundred yards I was utterly lost. Above was the smooth, black roof; below, the ties and the rails; and on either side, behind the two long rows of props, the face of the coal-seam, which glittered and sparkled in the light from our pit-lamps like a dull diamond.

We talked a little. My companion asked me where I had worked before, how much I knew of mines, and a few other questions; and still we walked on, dodging the low wire that comes level with one's ear, and stumbling over the layer of broken coal that lay strewn here and there between the rails.

The silence was like the darkness — a total absence of sound, rather than stillness, as my first impression of the mine had been that of an absence of light, rather than of darkness. The smoking lights in our caps seemed to press out through the blackness twenty feet around us, where the light disappeared and was gone. And always in front of us, out of the black darkness, the two long lines of props on either side of the track stepped one by one into the yellow haze of light and sank again into darkness behind us as we walked.

The air was cool and damp, but as we turned the last corner, the dampness seemed suddenly gone from it. It was warmer and closer. Here the track swerved up from one of the main tunnels into a 'room'; and at the end, or 'heading' of this room, which we reached a few minutes later, empty and waiting for its first load, stood one of the square cars which I had seen before at the mine-bottom and which we passed several times on sidings by the track. The car was pushed up to the end of the track and its wheels 'spragged' by two blocks of coal. Here the tunnel suddenly ended, and from the blank back 'face' a rough,

broken pile of coal streamed down on both sides of the car and reared up before it against the roof.

'Just shovel 'er full, then wait till the motor takes her out and sends in an empty, and fill that one. I'll look in on you once in a while and see how you're getting along.'

Then he turned and walked down the track and left me in the dim light of my single pit-lamp.

II

In the first days of coal-mining — as in many mines to-day where modern methods have not superseded those of old-time miners — a man did all the work. With his hand-drill he bored into the face of the coal at the head of his room, or entry, and from his keg of powder he made long cartridges and inserted them into his drill-holes. Then, when the coal was blasted down, and he had broken it with a pick, he loaded it with his shovel into a car; and trimming square the face of the tunnel, propping when necessary, he pushed on and on until he broke through and joined the next tunnel or completed the required length of that single entry.

But to-day these conditions are, in most instances, changed. The work begins with the 'machine-men,' who operate the 'chain-machines.' In order that the blast may dislodge by gravity an even block of coal, of the dimensions of the cross-section of the tunnel, these men cut with their machines a 'sump-cut,' or, in other words, carve out an opening level with the floor, about six inches high and six feet deep, at the end of the tunnel. The machines — which are propelled by electricity — consist of a motor and a large oblong disk, about which travels an endless chain containing sharp steel 'bits' or picks. The machine is braced, the current turned on, and the disk advanced against the coal, automatically advancing as the bits grind out the

coal. As soon as the machine has entered to the full six feet, the disk is withdrawn and the cut continued until it extends across the entire face.

In the evening the drillers, with their powerful air-drills, bore a series of five or six six-foot 'shot-holes,' four along the roof, and two on each side for the 'rib-shots.' Then a third crew of men, the 'shot-firers,' fill the deep drill-hole with long cartridges of coarse black powder, and blast down the coal, which falls broken and crumbled into the cut prepared by the machine-men. In the morning, when the ever-moving current of air, forced into the mine by the fan at the mouth of the air-shaft, has cleared away the dust and smoke, the loaders enter the mine, and all day long load into the ever-ready cars the coal that has been blasted down, until the 'place' is cleaned up, and their work is done. Then they move on to another 'place'; and so the work goes on in a perfect system of rotation.

My companion had told me, as we walked from the mine-bottom, that his name was Billy Wild. 'Call me Billy,' he said; and as we walked down the track to the main entry, he turned and called over his shoulder, 'You're in Room 27, third west-south. That's where you are, if you want to know.'

The light in my lamp was burning low, and I sat down on a pile of coal beside the track, lifted it out of the socket in my cap, and pried up the wick with a nail which one of the men 'on top' had given me for the purpose. Then I stripped to the waist and began to load, shovelful after shovelful, each lifted four feet and turned over into the waiting car, for two long hours, sometimes stopping to break with my pick great blocks of coal that were too large to lift, even with my hands. Then, finally, lumps of coal began to show above the edge of the car, and I 'trimmed' it, lifting some of the larger pieces to my knees, then against

my chest, and then throwing them up on the top of the pile.

The noise of the shovel scraping against the floor and the clatter of the coal as the great pile slid down and filled each hole that I dug out at its foot, filled the tunnel with friendly sounds; but when the car was loaded and I slipped on my coat and sat down on a pile of fine coal-dust beside the track to wait, silence suddenly submerged me. I could hear my heart beat, and curious noises sang in my ears. Up in the roof, under the stratum of slate above the coal, came a trickling sound like running water — the sound of gas seeping out through the crevices in the coal. I was wet with sweat, and my face, hands, and body were black where the great cloud of dust which my shovel had created had smeared my wet skin. Dull pains in the small of my back caught me when I moved, and every muscle in my body ached. (In a week my hands had blistered, the blisters had broken, and over the cracked flesh ingrained with coal-dust healing callouses had begun to form.)

Then, far off in the distance, came a muffled, grinding sound that grew louder and louder — a sound that almost terrified. A dull, yellow light, far down in the mouth of the room, outlined the square of the tunnel; and then, around the corner came the headlight of the electric 'gathering' or switching locomotive, and above it, the bobbing yellow flames of two pit-lamps. With a grinding roar, the motor struck the upgrade and came looming up the tunnel, filling it with its bulk. There was sound, and the silence was gone. The coupling of the locomotive locked with the coupling of the waiting car, and they rumbled away.

Once more the locomotive came, this time with an 'empty' to be filled. In the old days, mules were used to 'gather' the loaded cars, and, in fact, are still employed in most mines to-day; but electricity permits bigger loads, and

the dozen or two of mules that lived in the mine were used only where it was impossible to run the locomotives.

At the end of the week I was given a companion, or 'buddy.' Our lockers in the wash-house were near together, and we usually went down on the same hoist; but some mornings I would find Jim ahead of me, waiting by the scale-house. Jim rarely took the full benefit of the wash-house privileges, and morning found him with the dirt and grime of the work of the previous day still on his face. He was a Greek, short, with a thin, black moustache, which drooped down into two 'rat-tail' points. Around each eye a heavy black line of coal-dust was penciled, as though by an actor's crayon. His torn black working clothes, greasy with oil dripped from his pit-lamp, hung on him like rags on a scarecrow.

From the scale-house we walked up the now familiar entries in 'third west-south' to the room where we worked, and dug out our picks and shovels from under a pile of coal where we had hidden them the night before. Then, in the still, close air of the silent room, we began each morning to fill the first car.

Down in the scale-house, where the cars were hauled over the scales set in the track, before being dumped into the bins between the rails, Old Man Davis took the weights; and when the loader's number — a small brass tag with his number stamped upon it — was given to him, he marked down opposite it the pounds of coal to the loader's credit; and so each day on the great sheet, smooched with his dusty hands, stood a record of each man's strength measured in tons of coal.

When Jim and I worked together, we took turns hanging our numbers inside the car; and each night we remembered to whose credit the last car had been; and the next morning, if my number had been hung in the last car of the day

before, Jim would pull one of his tags out of his pocket and hang it on the hook just inside the edge of the empty car. Then, he on one side and I on the other, we worked, shovelful after shovelful, until the coal showed above the edge. And then came the 'trimming,' with the great blocks that had to be lifted and pushed with our chests and arms up on the top of the filled car.

Time went slowly then, for we could load a car together in less than an hour; and sometimes it took an hour and a half before the 'gathering' motor would come grinding up into the room to give us an 'empty.' In those long half-hours we would sit together on a pile of coal-dust beside the track and try to talk to each other.

Jim was a Greek, and from what I was able to gather, he came from somewhere in the southern part of the peninsula. I remembered a little Homer, and I often tried stray words on him; but my pronunciation of the Greek of ancient Athens was not the Greek of Jim Bardas; and although he recognized attempts at his own tongue and oftentimes the meaning of the words, it was not until we discovered a system of writing that we began to get along. Mixed in with the coal that had been blasted down by the shot-firers the night before, we occasionally found strips of white paper from the cartridges. We always saved these and laid them beside our dinner-pails; and when the car was filled and we had sat down again in the quiet beside the track, we would take our pit-lamps out of our caps and, rubbing our fingers in the greasy gum of oil and coal-dust that formed under the lamp-spout, we would write Greek words with our fingers on the white strips of paper.

Jim knew some English: the word for coal, car, loader — and he learned that my name was Joe, and called me 'My friend,' and 'buddie.' Then sometimes, after the fascination of writing words had worn away, we would sit still and

listen to the gas or for the approach of the motor; and sometimes, when the wicks in our lamps had burned low, I would take out of my pocket the round ball of lamp-wick, and, like old women with a skein of yarn, we would wind back and forth, from his fingers to my own, sixteen strands of lamp-wick; and then, tying the end in a rude knot and breaking it off, stick the skein of wick down the spout of the lamp until only the end remained in sight. Next, lifting the little lid on the top, we would fill the body with oil, shaking it until the wick was thoroughly soaked so that it would burn.

III

To the ear accustomed to the constant sound of a living world, the stillness of a coal-mine, where the miles of cross-cuts and entries and the unyielding walls swallow up all sounds and echo, is a silence that is complete; but, as one becomes accustomed to the silence through long hours of solitary work, sounds become audible that would escape an ear less trained. The trickling murmur of the gas; the spattering fall of a lump of coal, loosened by some mysterious force from a cranny in the wall; the sudden knocking and breaking of a stratum far up in the rock above; or the scurry of a rat off somewhere in the darkness — strike on the ear loud and startlingly. The eye, too, becomes trained to penetrate the darkness; but the darkness is so complete that there is a limit, the limit of the rays cast by the pit-lamp.

There is a curious thing that I have noticed, and as I have never heard it mentioned by any of the other men, perhaps it is an idea peculiar to myself; but on days when I entered the mine, with the strong yellow sunlight and the blue sky as a last memory of the world above, I carried with me a condition of fair weather that seemed to pene-

trate down into the blackness of the entries and make my pit-lamp burn a little more brightly. On days when we entered the mine with a gray sky above, or with a cold rain beating in our faces, there was a depression of spirits that made the blackness more dense and unyielding, and the lights from the lamps seemed less cheerful.

Sometimes the roof was bad in the rooms, and I soon learned from the older miners to enter my room each morning testing gingerly with my pit-lamp for the presence of gas, and reaching far up with my pick, tapping on the smooth stone roof to test its strength. If the steel rang clean against the stone, the roof was good; but if it sounded dull and drummy, it might be dangerous. Sometimes, when the roof was weak, we would call for the section boss and prop up the loosened stone; but more often, the men ran their risk. We worked so many days in safety that it seemed strange that death could come; and when it did come, it came so suddenly that there was a surprise, and the next day we began to forget.

I had heard much of the dangers that the miner is exposed to, but little has been said of the risks to which the men through carelessness subject themselves. Death comes frequently to the coal-miners from a 'blown-out shot.' When the blast is inserted in the drill-hole, several dummy cartridges are packed in for tamping. If these are properly made and tamped, the force of the explosion will tear down the coal properly; but if the man has been careless in his work, the tamps will blow out like shot from a gun-barrel, and igniting such gas or coal-dust as may be present, kill or badly burn the shot-firers. The proper tamping is wet clay, but it is impossible to convince the men of it, and nine out of ten will tamp their holes with dummies filled with coal-dust (itself a dangerous explosive) scooped up from the side of the track. Again, powder-kegs are some-

times opened in a manner which seems almost the act of an insane man. Rather than take the trouble to unscrew the cap in the head of the tin powder-keg and pour out the powder through its natural opening, the miner will drive his pick through the head of the keg and pour the powder from the jagged square hole he has punched. And these are but two of the many voluntary dangers which a little care on the part of the men themselves would obviate.

A mine always seems more or less populated when the day-shift is down; for during the hours of the working day, in every far corner, at the head of every entry and room, there are men drilling, loading, and ever pushing forward its boundaries. At five o'clock the long line of blackened miners which is formed at the foot of the hoisting-shaft begins to leave the mine; and by six o'clock, with the exception of a few inspectors and fire-bosses, the mine is deserted.

The night-shift began at eight, and it was as though night had suddenly been hastened forward, to step from the soft evening twilight on the hoist, and, in a brief second, leave behind the world and the day and plunge back into the darkness of the mine.

We were walking up the track from the mine-bottom toward six west-south — Billy Wild, Pat Davis, two track-repairers, and I. As we turned the corner by the run-around, there came suddenly from far off in the thick stillness a faint tremor and a strong current of air. The 'shooters' were at work. For a quarter of a mile we walked on, stopping every once in a while to listen to the far-off 'boom' of the blasts that came through the long tunnels, faint and distant, as though muffled by many folds of heavy cloth. We pushed open the big trappers' door just beyond where First and Second Right turn off from the main entry, and came into the faint yellow glow of a single electric lamp that hung from the low beamed roof.

Beside the track, in a black niche cut in the wall of coal, two men were working. A safe twenty feet from them their lighted pit-lamps flared where they were hung by the hooks from one of the props. Round, black cans of powder tumbled together in the back of the alcove, a pile of empty paper tubes and great spools of thick, white fuse lay beside them. We sat down on the edge of the track, at a safe distance from the open powder, and watched them as they blew open the long, white tubes and with a battered funnel poured in the coarse grains of powder, until the smooth, round cartridge was filled, a yard or two of white fuse hanging from its end. In fifteen minutes they had finished, and one of the men gathered in his arms the pile of completed cartridges and joined us in the main entry.

A few minutes later, as we neared the heading, a sudden singing 'boom' came down strongly against the air-current and bent back the flames in our pit-lamps. Far off in the blackness ahead, a point of light marked the direction of the tunnel; another appeared. Suddenly, from the thick silence, came the shrill whine of the air-drills. A couple of lamps, like yellow tongues of flame, shone dimly in the head of the tunnel, and the air grew thick with a flurry of fine coal-dust. Then, below the bobbing lights appeared the bodies of two men, stripped to the waist, the black coating of dust that covered them moist with gleaming streaks of sweat.

'How many holes have you drilled?' yelled Wild, his voice drowned by the scream of the long air-drill as the writhing bit tore into the coal.

There was a final convulsive grind as the last inch of the six-foot drill sank home, then the sudden familiar absence of sound save for the hiss of escaping air.

'All done here.'

Slowly the two men pulled the long screw blade from the

black breast of the coal, the air-hose writhing like a wounded snake about their ankles. The driller who had spoken wiped his sweaty face with his hands, his eyes blinking with the dust. He picked up his greasy coat from beside the track and wrapped it around his wet shoulders.

'Look out for the gas!' he shouted. 'There is a bit here, up high.'

He raised his lamp slowly to the jagged roof. A quick blue flame suddenly expanded from the lamp and puffed down at him as he took away his hand.

In the black end of the tunnel six small holes, each an inch and a half in diameter and six feet deep, invisible in the darkness and against the blackness of the coal, marked where the blasts were to be placed. On the level floor, stretching from one wall of the entry to the other, the undercut had been ground out with the chain-machines by the machine-men during the afternoon; and as soon as the blasts were in and the fuses lighted, the sudden wrench of these charges would tear down a solid block of coal six feet deep by the height and depth of the entry, to fall crushed and broken into the sump-cut, ready for the loaders on the following morning.

Selecting and examining each cartridge, the shooters charged the drill-holes. Two cartridges of black powder, tamped in with a long copper-headed rod; then dummies of clay for wads, leaving hanging like a great white cord from each charged drill-hole a yard of the long, white fuse.

We turned and tramped down the tunnel and squatted on the track a safe fifty yards away. Down at the end of the tunnel we had just deserted, bobbed the tiny flames of the lights in the shooters' pit-caps. There was a faint glow of sparks. 'Coming!' they yelled out through the darkness, and we heard them running as we saw their lights grow larger.

For a minute we silently waited. Then, from the far end of the tunnel, muffled and booming like the breaking of a great wave in some vast cave, came a singing roar, now like the screech of metal hurled through the air, and the black end of the tunnel flamed suddenly defiant; a solid square of crimson flames, like the window of a burning house; and a roar of flying air drove past us, putting out our lights and throwing us back against the rails.

'It's a windy one,' yelled Wild. 'Look out for the rib-shots.'

Like a final curtain in a darkened theatre, a slow pall of heavy smoke sank down from the roof, and as it touched the floor, a second burst of flame tore it suddenly upward, and far down the entry, the trappers' door banged noisily in the darkness. Then we crept back slowly, breathing hard in an air thick with dust and the smell of the burnt black powder, to the end of the tunnel, where the whole face had been torn loose — a great pile of broken coal against the end of the entry.

Often, bits of paper from the cartridges, lighted by the blast, will start a fire in the piles of coal-dust left by the machine-men; and before the shooters leave a room that has been blasted, an examination must be made in order to prevent the possibility of fire.

All night long we moved from one entry to another, blasting down in each six feet more of the tunnel, which would be loaded out on the following day; and it was four in the morning before the work was finished.

It was usually between four and five in the morning when we left the mine. As we stepped from the hoist and left behind us the confining darkness, the smoky air, and the sense of oppression and silence of the mine below, the soft, fresh morning air in the early dawn, or sometimes the cool rain, seemed never more refreshing. One does not

notice the silence of a mine so much upon leaving the noise of the outer world and entering the maze of tunnels on the day's work, as when stepping off the hoist in the early morning hours, when the world is almost still: the sudden sense of sound and of living things emphasizes, by contrast, the silence of the underworld. There is a noise of life, and the very motion of the air seems to carry sounds. A dog barking half a mile away in the sleeping town sounds loud and friendly, and there seems to be a sudden clamor that is almost bewildering.

IV

It is natural that a mine should have its superstitions. The darkness of the underworld, the silence, the long hours of solitary work, are all conditions ideal to the birth of superstition; and when the workmen are drawn from many nationalities, it is again but natural that the same should be true of their superstitions.

One night when Carlson, the general manager, was sitting in his office, there was a knock at the door, and two loaders, from the Hartz Mountains, came into the room, talking excitedly, with Little Dick, the interpreter. Their story was disconnected, but Carlson gathered the main facts. They had been working in the northwest corner of the mine, in an older part of the workings, and on their way out that afternoon, as they were passing an abandoned room, they had noticed several lights far up at its heading. Knowing that the room was no longer being worked, and curious as to who should be there, they had walked up quietly toward the lights. Here their story became more confused. There were two men, they insisted, and they were certain that they were dwarfs. They had noticed them carefully, and described them as little men, with great picks, who were digging or burying something in the

clay floor at the foot of one of the props. A sudden terror had seized them, and they had not delayed to make further investigation; but on the way out they had talked together and had decided that these two strange creatures had been burying some treasure: 'a pot of gold,' one of them argued.

Carlson was interested. The questions and answers grew more definite and more startling. The two men whom they had seen were certainly hump-backed. They were wielding enormous picks, and one of the loaders believed that he had seen them put something into the hole. Then came their request that they might be allowed to go back that night into the mine, and with their own tools go to this abandoned room and dig for the buried treasure. It was against precedent to allow any but the night-shift into the mine; but superstitions are demoralizing, and the best remedy seemed to be to allow them to prove themselves mistaken. An hour later they were lowered on the hoist; and all that night, alone in the silence of the mine, they dug steadily in the heading of the abandoned room; but no treasure was discovered. All the next night they dug; and it was not until seven nights' labor had turned over a foot and a half of the hard clay of the entire heading that they abandoned their search.

It is the custom of the men, when they leave the mine at the close of the shift, to hide their tools; and the imaginations of the loaders, worked upon by eight hours of solitary work, had doubtless seen in the forms of two of their companions who were hiding their shovels the traditional gnomes of their own Hartz Mountains.

In another part of the mine another superstition was given birth that led to a more unfortunate result. This time it happened among the Croatians, and, unfortunately, the story was told throughout the boarding-houses before the

bosses learned of it, so that one morning a great section of the mine was abandoned by the men.

Up in the headings of one of the entries — so the story went — lived the ghost of a white mule. As the men worked with the coal before them, and the black emptiness of the tunnel behind, this phantom mule would materialize silently from the wall of the entry, and with the most diabolical expression upon its face, creep quietly down behind its intended victim, who — all unconscious of its presence — would be occupied in loading his car. If the man turned, and for even a fraction of a second his eyes rested upon the phantom, the shape would suddenly disappear; but if he were less fortunate, and that unconscious feeling of a presence behind him did not compel him to turn his eyes, the phantom mule would sink his material teeth deep into the miner's shoulder; and death would follow. It was fortunate, indeed, that the only two men who had been visited by this unpleasant apparition had turned and observed him.

Perhaps it had been the sudden white glare cast from the headlight of a locomotive far down the entry, or perhaps it had been entirely the imagination, but, at all events, a man had come from his work early one afternoon inspired with this strange vision, and the next day another man also had seen it. The story was noised around, and two days later the men stuck firmly to their determination that they would not enter that part of the mine.

Fortunately for the superintendent, a crowd of Bulgarians had just arrived from East St. Louis, seeking employment. The Croatians were sent into another part of the mine to work, a mile from the haunted entries, where there were no unpleasant ghosts of white mules to disturb their labors; and so long as the mine remained in operation, there is no further record of the unpleasant ramblings of this

fantastical animal; at least, none of the Bulgarians ever saw it.

With the mule came the ghost of a little white dog; but for some curious reason, although the dog was reported by many to have run out from abandoned rooms and barked at the men as they stumbled up the entry, but little attention was paid to it, and it seemed to possess no particularly disturbing influence.

There were many Negroes in the mine and they, too, had their 'h'ants' and superstitions; but these were of a more ordinary nature. In Room 2, third west-south, a sudden fall of rock from the roof had caught two miners. Tons of stone had followed, and in a second, two men had been crushed, killed, and buried. Death must have been instantaneous, and months of labor would have been required to recover the bodies, which were probably crushed out of human resemblance; but even years after this happened, Room 2 was one that was carefully avoided by all the Negroes, and if it ever became necessary for one of them to pass it alone, he would always go by on the run; for back under the tons of white shale that came down straight across the room-mouth the ghosts of Old Man Gleason and another, whose name was forgotten, still remained — immortal.

It was to prevent the establishment of such superstitions that the shift was always called off for the day if a man was killed in the mine; and in the morning, when the men returned to their work, the boss of the section in which the unfortunate miner had met his death took particular care to place several men together at that place, in order that no superstition might grow up around it.

WOMAN'S SPHERE

BY S. H. KEMPER

'WILBUR, dear,' said Aunt Susan, 'Rosa is very busy with the washing this morning, and if you will go down into the garden and gather this basket full of peas and then shell them for her to cook for dinner, I will — ' Aunt Susan paused to reflect a moment, then continued, 'I will give you a new ball for a birthday present.'

Aunt Susan smiled kindly at the flashing look of intense joy that Wilbur lifted to her face as he seized the basket she was holding out to him.

'I — I'd just love to have it!' he exclaimed.

He was quite overcome with emotion, and tore away toward the garden at top speed.

Wilbur's mother was ill, and Wilbur had been sent to visit Aunt Susan in order that the house might be quiet. Aunt Susan was really Wilbur's father's aunt. She was grandma's sister, and she was very old. Grandma was not old. Her hair was white, but it went in nice squiggles around her face, and she wore big hats with plumes and shiny, rustly dresses, and high-heeled shoes. And when she kissed you she clasped you in a powerful embrace against her chest. Grandma was not old. But Aunt Susan, with her smooth gray hair and her wrinkled face and spectacles, her plain black dress and little shawl, and her funny cloth shoes, seemed to Wilbur a being inconceivably stricken of old. You felt intensely sorry for her for being so old. You were so sorry that you felt it inside of you; it was almost as if your stomach ached. And she was always kind and gentle. You felt that it would be a grievous thing to hurt her feelings or trouble her in any way.

Wilbur's birthday came on Thursday and this was only Monday. A long time to wait. Wilbur needed a ball very badly. He had made friends with a number of boys here in Aunt Susan's town, and the baseball season was at its height. Wilbur's friends owned several perfectly worthy bats and two or three gloves, but there was a serious lack of balls.

That afternoon, joining the boys on the vacant lot where they played, Wilbur informed them with great satisfaction of Aunt Susan's promise.

'My aunt is going to give me a new ball on my birthday,' he said to them.

They were more than pleased with the news. Wilbur found himself the centre of flattering interest. He told them that he guessed it would be a regular league ball.

Wilbur exerted himself earnestly to be helpful to Aunt Susan and Rosa all day on Tuesday and Wednesday. He felt that he could not do enough for Aunt Susan, and also that it would be well to remind her of her promise by constant acts of courtesy and service, for it was a long time before Thursday. But it did not seem possible that any one could really forget an affair so important and so agreeable as the purchase of a ball.

Wilbur knew where Aunt Susan would get the ball: at Reiter's store, of course. Reiter kept a store where books and magazines and athletic goods were sold. He kept all the standard things; the ball would be of a good make, Wilbur was sure.

Aunt Susan did not often go down town. Except when busy about her housekeeping, she was likely to spend the time rocking in her old-fashioned rocker on the front porch, with a work-basket beside her, occupying herself with needlework or knitting. She knitted a great deal. There were many bright-colored wools in her work-basket.

On Wednesday afternoon Wilbur's heart gave an excited jump when he saw Aunt Susan coming downstairs tying her little bonnet over her gray hair. Her black silk shopping-bag hung on her arm. Wilbur did not doubt that she was going down town with an eye single to Reiter's store. He assumed an unconscious air, just as one did when mother went shopping before Christmas. He watched Aunt Susan out of sight, and afterward hung about the front yard till he saw her returning. He ran to open the gate for her and took her parasol and bag, looking up at her with bright, trustful eyes. The bag seemed quite full of small parcels as he carried it for Aunt Susan.

Wilbur fell asleep that night wondering whether Aunt Susan would put the ball on the breakfast-table next morning, where he would see it when he entered the dining-room. Perhaps she would bring it after he was asleep, and place it on the chair beside his bed, or perhaps on the old-fashioned bureau. There were many happy possibilities.

When the window opposite his bed began to grow bright with the pink and gold of sunrise, Wilbur woke and sat up, looking first at the chair, then at the bureau. No, it was not in the room. It would be in the dining-room, then. When he went downstairs he was surprised to find that Aunt Susan had not yet left her room. In the kitchen Rosa was only beginning her preparations for breakfast. Wilbur spent a long time, a restless but happy hour, waiting, idling about the dewy garden and the front yard, feeding the chickens and playing with the cat.

At last Rosa rang the bell and Wilbur went into the house. Aunt Susan, seated at the breakfast table, greeted him affectionately.

'Many happy returns, dear!' she said, holding out her hand.

She drew him to her and kissed his cheek. Now, surely—

But the ball was not on the table beside his plate. He could not see it anywhere in the room.

The breakfasts at Aunt Susan's were always good. There would be fried chicken and waffles, or muffins, and squashy corn bread. Indeed all meal-times at Aunt Susan's would have been periods of unmixed joy if Aunt Susan had not felt obliged to keep up a steady conversation. Aunt Susan made small talk laboriously. It distracted your mind. She had a strange delusion that one was avidly interested in one's schoolbooks. She constantly dwelt upon the subject of school. It made things difficult, for school was over now and all its rigors happily forgotten. This morning, what with Aunt Susan's talk and his excitement, Wilbur could hardly eat anything.

Breakfast was over. Aunt Susan and Rosa were in the pantry consulting on housekeeping matters. Wilbur sat down in a rocking-chair on the front porch and waited. He waited and waited, rocking violently. And then at last he heard Aunt Susan calling him.

He was out of his chair and in the hall like a flash.

'Yes'm,' he answered. 'Yes'm. What is it, Aunt Susan?'

Aunt Susan was coming down the stairs.

'Here is the ball I promised you, dear,' she said. She placed in his outstretched hand —

Wilbur had visualized it so vividly, had imagined the desired thing with such intensity, that it was as if a strange transformation had taken place before his eyes. He was holding, not the hard, heavy, white ball he had seemed actually to see, with its miraculously perfect stitching and the trim lettering of the name upon it: a curious, soft thing lay in his hand, a home-made ball constructed of wools. There seemed to be millions of short strands of bright-colored wools, all held together in the centre by some means

and sticking out in every direction. Their smoothly clipped ends formed the surface of the ball.

It was the kind of thing you would give a baby in a go-cart.

Wilbur stood and gazed at it. The kind of thing you would give a baby in a go-cart! Then he looked up at Aunt Susan, and suddenly the sense of his great disappointment was lost in that immense, aching pity for her. She was so old, and she had made it herself, thinking it would please him.

'It's — it's awful pretty!' Wilbur stammered.

He felt inexpressibly sorry for Aunt Susan. How could any one be so utterly without comprehension!

Aunt Susan patted his cheek.

'You have been a good boy,' she said. 'I hope you will enjoy playing at ball with your little friends.'

Wilbur went cold. The other fellows! He foresaw well enough their attitude toward his misfortune. To them it would seem a subject for unsparing derision. The kind of thing you would give a baby in a go-cart! And he had said, 'I guess it will be a regular league ball.'

Aunt Susan went away upon her housekeeping activities, and Wilbur, after standing for a while turning the woolly ball in his hands, went upstairs to his room. He hid the ball under the neatly folded garments in the upper drawer of the bureau. It was a relief to get it out of sight. He had a heavy, sickish feeling in his chest. The more he thought over his trouble, the greater it seemed. A great dread of having the other boys know about it possessed him. He felt that he could not possibly bear the ignominy.

The morning dragged itself heavily away. Wilbur remained indoors. He could not go out for fear the other fellows might see him. He winced painfully at the thought of meeting them.

Rosa baked a fine cake for him, decorating it tastefully with nine pink candles, but Wilbur regarded it wanly.

At dinner Aunt Susan noticed his lack of appetite and fussed over him anxiously, dismaying his soul with dark hints of doses of medicine.

'I don't feel a bit sick, Aunt Susan,' he protested; 'honest, I don't.'

He felt almost desperate. He was heavy-hearted with his disappointment, oppressed with the fear of discovery; and now he must be harried and pursued with threats of medicine.

It was a miserable afternoon. Wilbur undertook to write a letter to his mother. Usually Aunt Susan was obliged to urge him to his duty, but to-day it offered an excuse to remain indoors, and Wilbur seized it gladly. Writing a letter was a business that took time and effort. After a while, as Wilbur sat in the attitude of composition, with his legs wrapped around the legs of his chair and his shoulders hunched over the table, Aunt Susan's anxious eye detected the fact that he was not writing but was absently chewing his pencil.

'Wilbur, dear,' Aunt Susan said, 'you are staying in the house too much. Put your letter away now and run out of doors. I think you need the fresh air. You can finish your letter to-morrow.'

'Oh, I would rather finish it now, please,' Wilbur said; 'you know poppa is coming to see us this evening, and if I get it done I can give it to him to take to mamma.'

He hastily stuck out his tongue and, breathing heavily, began to write.

Throughout the afternoon Wilbur contrived by one excuse or another to remain in the house. After the early tea Aunt Susan sat down in one of the porch rockers with her knitting and Wilbur sedately took another. With great

effort he sustained the conversation which Aunt Susan considered necessary. Presently, with a throb of alarm, Wilbur saw Henry, the boy who lived next door, climbing the fence dividing the two yards. With fascinated dread Wilbur watched him approach. He stood still at the foot of the porch steps.

'Hello,' he said in his deep and husky voice.

'Hello,' Wilbur replied coldly.

'Good evening, Henry,' said Aunt Susan; 'sit down and make us a visit. How is your father? How is your mother? When is your married sister coming home for a visit?' And so on.

Henry sat down on the steps, answering Aunt Susan with weary civility. Wilbur rocked and rocked with nervous violence. Sitting in a chair like a grown person, he felt a certain aloofness from Henry on the steps. It was a poor enough security, but he clung to it. And then suddenly Aunt Susan was saying, —

'Wilbur, get the ball I gave you and play a game of ball with Henry.'

The moment of discovery had come. And Wilbur found himself wondering dully what Aunt Susan's idea of a ball game could be like. His mind seemed to fumble stiffly with the unimportant thought. He rose heavily. Henry had snapped up briskly from his place on the steps as Aunt Susan spoke.

'That's right!' he said. 'Let's get out there in the road and warm up.'

Wilbur turned to enter the house.

'I'll go with you,' Henry said.

They ascended the stairs, Wilbur lagging on every step and Henry breasting forward like a homeward-bound horse. They crossed the little upstairs hall and stood at the door of Wilbur's room. The woolly ball lay on the bureau, its many

colors garish in the sunset. Wilbur had left it in the drawer, but Rosa had been in the room putting away his freshly ironed clothes, and had taken it out and placed it on top of the bureau for all the world to see.

Wilbur shut his eyes and waited for a bitter outcry from Henry. There was, however, a moment of silence, and then Henry demanded impatiently, —

'Well, where is it at?'

Wilbur opened his eyes and regarded Henry stupidly. Henry then did not even recognize the strange, bright object on the bureau as a ball. Probably he took it for a pincushion. The shock of the unexpected reprieve made Wilbur feel faint and confused.

'It's here — it's right in this room,' he stammered.

'In the bruy-yo?' Henry asked, pointing toward the old-fashioned bureau.

'I — I left it in the top drawer of the bruy-yo.'

Henry went and opened the drawers one by one and rummaged in them.

'It ain't here!' he exclaimed; 'I bet somebody's stolen it from you! The colored girl! I bet she' s stolen it!'

'Aw, she would n't steal! She's nice!' Wilbur exclaimed; but even as he spoke, he saw his mistake. Henry had made the descent to a course of deceit, of hideous disloyalty to a dear friend, fearfully easy! Wilbur descended. 'Maybe,' he faltered, 'maybe she needed a ball awfully and just had to take it! Maybe she needed it awfully!'

'Well, ain't you going to try to get it back from her?'

'Oh, no!' Wilbur cried in horror. 'I won't say a word about it. It would hurt her feelings. She's nice —'

'Well, I bet if it was my ball and anybody stole it I would raise an awful row!'

'I won't say anything about it,' Wilbur repeated. 'It would hurt her feelings. And I guess you better go home

now, Henry. Maybe your mother is wondering where you are.'

Wilbur adopted the formula with which other boys' mothers were wont to put him on the social inclined plane. He felt a desperate need to be rid of Henry. Henry departed without resentment.

A little later Wilbur's father came. It was a comfort to have poppa there. Wilbur's tired spirit leaned against his big, quiet strength. In the dusk Aunt Susan and poppa sat on the porch and talked. Wilbur stood beside poppa's chair. It was peaceful and cool in the late evening. Wilbur liked to hear the noise the katydids made in the trees. It went on, over and over and over —

Suddenly, as if recollecting something he had forgotten, poppa put his hand into his coat pocket and drew out — It was the ball of Wilbur's dreams. Poppa, still talking to Aunt Susan, was holding it out to him. He saw it in all its utterly desirable excellence, its natty charms, hard and heavy and smooth and gleaming white. Wilbur's small brown fingers curved themselves feebly upon its taut sides. He did not speak, but his long-lashed eyes, brooding upon the perfection within his grasp, lifted for a moment to his father's face a deep look of such intensity that poppa was startled.

'It's your birthday, old chap,' he said, putting his arm around Wilbur. 'I thought you might like a new ball.'

He felt Wilbur trembling slightly and wondered whether, in spite of the little fellow's seemingly perfect health, he could be an over-strung and nervous child.

'Now you have two balls,' Aunt Susan said fatuously, rocking herself in her old rocker.

'Yes'm,' said Wilbur.

From the security of his immense felicity he smiled at her kindly, very kindly, very indulgently, for how could she understand?

BABANCHIK

BY CHRISTINA KRYSTO

I

It was my smallest brother who called him that, because, at the time of their meeting, he could not manage the whole of his very long name. But his friends took it up presently, liking the ridiculous yet oddly caressing sound of it, until all who knew him well knew him only as Babanchik.

I remember him first as a chance guest in my father's house by the side of the Black Sea — a big, deep-chested man in a badly wrinkled pongee suit, who missed his train because we children had drawn him into a game of hide-and-seek. I can still hear his laughter-filled voice demanding fiercely, 'Where are they? Where are they?' as he flung himself about the room, making wide détours to avoid our feet, which protruded from under the cloth-hung table, while the train, with his car attached, paused a moment at the 'half station' at the far end of the pasture and went roaring on along the shore. He stayed the night with us, and our child-world changed forthwith.

During the two years which followed, the play-times of Babanchik and his children were inextricably bound with ours, and the distance between our homes grew very short. At Christmas we danced around the scintillating tree in his spacious Tiflis house, and at Easter he helped us with the beating of the innumerable eggs which go into the Easter bread of Russia, spattering the kitchen wall most dreadfully.

Business brought him often to Batum, which lay just over the hill from us — so often that we fell into the habit

of racing down to the pasture-bars every Saturday to wait for the afternoon train. It was long and wearying, that walk back, on the days when the train clattered by without pausing. But on other days, when, just this side of the cliff, the engine whistled to announce the stop, — when we listened, breathless, for the setting of the brakes, when we saw his huge figure swing lightly from the steps, coat-pockets bulging with mysteries, and heard the gay voice shouting that his own car would not come by until Monday, — the walk home was a march of triumph. Two summers we spent together in a half-starved Georgian village high in the Caucasus Mountains, where we lived on bread and eggs, both reeking with the wild garlic which grew thick among the wheat; ran, bare of head and foot, over the pine-grown cañons; and loved every moment of it.

It was in those two summers that we came to know Babanchik best and to adore him accordingly. We might emulate the manners of Manya, his young-lady daughter of twelve; we might acknowledge the leadership of his harum-scarum son Kolya; but it was Babanchik who really counted. It was he who led our marvelous expeditions to the neighboring peaks, his clothes steaming with the effort of that leadership — he who showed us where to look for mushrooms, and later fried those mushrooms for us, surreptitiously, lest mother begrudge us the butter where no new supply was to be had. His mind it was which settled, wisely and fairly, all our momentous quarrels, and invented countless new and fascinating games when we had tired of the everlasting croquet. But for him we should never have bathed in the yellow water of the mad Kura, water so muddy that it left great streaks across the bath-towels; but for him we should never have been forgiven for robbing the little forest church of candles with which to rub the porch floor whenever we wanted to dance.

That the merry existence of his vacations was but a small part of his life, we knew, even as we guessed that the man who frolicked with us lived only in the hours of play. For often at tea-time on the porch we came upon the other Babanchik, a bitter and fearsome man who talked to father in a voice which, to us, was the voice of a stranger. They made us very wretched, those tea-times, when from an obscure porch corner we watched him striding up and down along the railing, the smile gone from his eyes, his cheeks flushed, his arms waving wildly. For we could never understand why the man who taught us that it was cruel to step on ants, seemed so ready and eager, at those times, to throttle some one, we knew not whom, unless it were the terrible creature he called the Russian government. It all hurt us inexpressibly. Yet hour after hour we watched him and listened to his long, involved denunciations of oppression and dishonesty and selfishness and class-distinction and many other long words which we could not grasp. And most difficult to fathom was his oft-repeated assertion that he was doing all that talking in behalf of us.

'It is for the children that I fight!' he would shout, stamping feverishly up and down the long porch; 'for my Manya and Kolya, and for your boys and girls and all the countless thousands of others whose lot has been cast with this accursed country! I must fight, for I know what will come to them! Their souls will be dwarfed and crippled by our stupid schools and our stupid laws, and their minds poisoned and embittered by suspicion and hatred and the damning sense of their impotence, as long as conditions here remain what they are! Our lives are behind us, yours and mine. But we must make theirs different for them, must keep them away from strait-jacket regulations, must keep them happy and trustful and brave! It is for

this that I fight! And I would fight if I knew that I could not change a word of our laws and our statutes!'

He did fight. Unceasingly, along with his rouad, work, — he was one of the managers of a Caucasian railrotine — went the bigger work of making his corner of the world a better place for those who came behind him. He fought in the ranks of his employees, that the least of these might claim justice and equality; pleaded with school boards and schoolmasters for patience and generosity toward their charges; and fought — and this was the most bitter fight of all — against those who held in their hands the destinies of his city.

In all this he was severely handicapped. An Armenian by birth, which in itself matters even in cosmopolitan Caucasus, he had inherited the ungovernable temper and unbridled tongue of his people; and this, coupled with his love for truth, worked him unceasing woe among the hidebound conservatism of his associates.

All this Babanchik knew. And yet, in spite of the knowledge, he had a dream of becoming a member of the city Duma, that he might have a real voice in the direction of the city's fortunes. It should not have been a thing so difficult of attainment. Time after time his name was proposed for the city ballot; time after time hordes of enthusiastic friends made his election a certainty; and time after time, as the deciding day drew near, his candidature was suppressed, his name withheld from the ballot, his adherents silenced — and the dream remained a dream. No one knew just when it happened, or just how: he was an Armenian and a revolutionist, a freethinker and an enemy of the government, marked '*neblagonadejny*' (not to be depended upon) in the police-books of the city — and no country knows so well as does Russia how best to curtail the activities of such men.

What he could do in spite of these drawbacks, he did. Was he not our undauntable Babanchik? If he could not insure fair play for the men of his railroad, he could give them of his advice and sympathy, and they forgot to ask for more. If additional factory windows did not come into being at his command, he could still lend his money to those of the workers who fell victims to the foul air; and how beautifully he lost his temper when a borrower spoke of interest! And if school boards and schoolmasters remained unyielding in their demands upon the children he loved, at least the holidays were his, when he could take those children on long walks in the open and teach them to respect their souls and not to step on ants.

All of which we learned much later. At the time, he was merely our Babanchik, without whom the world could no longer be imagined; who came in the evening to blow out our candles because he had guessed that the memory of his good-night laugh cheated the dark of its dangers; whose rumbling shout awakened us in the morning and opened up for us a new day of unsuspected possibilities.

II

The third summer we did not go to the mountains. Some one else was sharing Babanchik's cottage in the Georgian village; he was leading a band of new children in search of mushrooms and adventure. But we were too excited to care, even in the face of this.

A new unrest hung over our house. All the day long father was showing strangers about the place, pointing out to them the value of the untouched forest, the richness of the pasture land, the clearness of the drinking water, the glories of the mountains and the sea. In the sun-filled glass room which served as library mother was superintending the sorting and packing of books. And a placid-faced

woman with the patience of a saint was fitting our squirming bodies into trim, tight-fitting clothes, which, after the loose, shapeless things we had always worn, vexed us endlessly. We were going to America.

Babanchik came to us often in those last weeks, inexpressibly saddened by our impending departure; and his discussions, to which father listened a bit abstractedly now, grew ever more violent. Though their invariable ending filled us with an unexpected hope: —

'When my work is done here, I will come to you, in the United States. I cannot, now — there is still so much to be done for my weaker friends. But when I am very tired, so tired that I can no longer endure it, I shall take my children and come to you — to forget the Russia that I hate.'

So we parted. We leaned over the rail of an Odessa steamer, our arms overflowing with the packages he had brought us; and he stood on the edge of the wharf, waving his hat and smiling. But tears were running down his brown cheeks and losing themselves in his beard.

The new life, the new language, new interests, caught us. From the first Russia seemed very far behind. Several letters followed us. Kolya wrote three or four in his uneven round hand — funny little letters which began, 'We have two ducks and two puppies. How many dogs have you?' and which were properly answered in kind. After that, we forgot very quickly.

But Babanchik did not forget. Once every month we found in our mail-box a fat, square, carelessly addressed envelope, which held a letter for father and a folded note for each of us. The notes were full of gay nonsense, stories and rhymes and caricatures; but father grew very thoughtful over the letters.

Life was pressing Babanchik hard. He was still without

thought of defeat. But his enemies were bringing more stringent methods into the combat; he was now being constantly watched. Other troubles were even harder to bear. The government was consciously setting the hot-headed Georgians and Armenians at each other's throats, that neither might have time to think of greater issues. And Babanchik could but stand by and watch the suffering of his people. Manya was in school, in the hands of narrow and incompetent teachers, teachers selected for their political views. Kolya's turn would soon come. After that, so ran the letters, his children would have the choice between becoming power-seeking sycophants of the government, and going, as he had gone, into battle with it, knowing beforehand of their certain defeat. He could not take them away from it — yet. But he realized, he said, that each day, besides giving to him its measure of sorrow, brought a little nearer the fulfillment of his new dream. He was beginning to study English.

The years marched on. The square envelopes came less often, but they came, still full of their old-time warmth for us — full, too, of increasing enmity toward the country which we had left. Manya had gone to Petrograd to attend women's 'courses.' Two years later Kolya followed her, and entered the University in the same city at the time I was enrolled in mine. And when, a care-free sophomore, I was working off surplus energy in basket-ball and dramatics, a new alarm crept into Babanchik's letters. Manya and Kolya were becoming involved in the revolutionary movement.

It is hard, in these clean war days, to remember the murky chaos of the Russia of 1904–06. If a revolution could have come at all, it would have come in those years, and it would have been led by students. The younger minds were afire with visions of freedom, — irrepressible

combinations of deep conviction and the ardor of youth,— visions which took no cognizance of the wide and weary space which lies between desire and accomplishment. Class-rooms were hotbeds of revolutionary plots, — mad, illogical, glorious plots, — for which their authors, usually still in their teens, paid so heavily. Too heavily, for the government, alarmed, was losing its head a bit.

The heart of Babanchik beat fearfully. 'I am proud of the trend of their convictions,' he wrote, 'but sometimes I am a little afraid. They can so easily be led into a spectacular prank, a bit of mischief for which the government might take it into its head to punish them too harshly. And though we have all become accustomed to that sort of thing, it would hurt me sorely to have them spend two or three months in prison.'

He conjectured mildly. There was news one day, in our American newspapers, of the attempted assassination of a Petrograd official. We passed it by — attempted assassinations were no rare events just then — until the next letter came from Babanchik, a letter of two brief paragraphs. Both Manya and Kolya were implicated in the crime. Manya had waved her handkerchief from a window which commanded a view of the official's residence; Kolya had passed the signal to twenty fellow conspirators. All had been caught and all had confessed. The official was unhurt and there was hope of a light sentence. Still — the two or three months of prison lengthened into a prospective two or three years.

Once more he conjectured mildly. Manya was sentenced to be hanged. Kolya, because of extreme youth, was punished by life-imprisonment. We read the story of it, scarce believing, page after anguished page in a handwriting we did not recognize. We never knew — no one ever did know, save Babanchik himself — all that went after that. His

letters no longer came regularly, and, when they did come, were so incoherent with rage and despair that we gathered little information from them. We learned, however, that by some superhuman means he had obtained a stay in the execution of the sentence, had taken a leave of absence from his office in Tiflis, had called in all the money which he had loaned, borrowed what additional money he could, and had gone to Petrograd. At the end of eighteen months there was a new trial, and we were left to guess of much that went between.

It was not difficult to guess, in part. His way to that new trial had lain along the ways of personal influence, and the men who possessed that influence were the officials whom all his life he had hated and who knew him only as one 'not to be depended upon.' Could he have abandoned to their fate the twenty whom he did not even know, and worked for his children alone, his task would have been less difficult; but then he would not have been Babanchik.

So for eighteen months he worked; seeking audience in the studies of his enemies, humbling himself before their insolent eyes, accepting from them what taunts they chose to give, holding in calm control the hot temper which was hourly made less manageable by the strain under which he lived, pleading where he longed to curse, smiling where he would kill — and knowing, with a knowledge which made all these things possible, that a careless word on his part would take forever from twenty-two youngsters the one hope to which they clung. And so he accomplished the inconceivable. Somehow the new trial was held, somehow the twenty-two sentences were made lighter, unbelievably lighter. For Manya was sent into a far province and given hard labor for life, and Kolya would be free in ten years. But what those eighteen months did to the

loving big soul of Babanchik can best be told in the barely legible words of the letter which brought us the news.

'It has finished us at last, this country! It has strangled my children and torn my heart to shreds! I burn with shame at the thought of being its subject, and there is no wretchedness which I hold too great for it, no plague which I would not send upon it if I could! I long to take the first steamer away from it.'

But he had his lost fortune to recover before he could go. There were his debts, too; and the children needed money, even in prison. He went back to his work with redoubled energy. But as he fought for the money which would bring him to America, he found himself fighting against a new enemy. The splendid body had not been able to withstand the ravages upon his mind; he remembered suddenly that he was nearly seventy. He spoke little of this, — perhaps he would not believe it, quite, — but there was dejection in every word he wrote. And we began to wonder whether we should ever see our Babanchik again.

Yet in the winter of 1913 he came to us, a tired and feeble old man. There was a burned-out look in his eyes, and his wrinkled pongee suit hung limp from stooping shoulders. The journey across Siberia had been hard, that across the Pacific still more trying; there had been an alarming wireless from the nurse who accompanied him. But he reached us, and as I remember the sound of his laugh on that first day twenty years ago, so shall I never forget the ineffable happiness in his face when he stood, a few days after his coming, and looked out over our sunlit valley.

'Peace,' he said, 'and joy. And the end of Russia forever. God has been good.'

He built for himself a tiny bungalow in a corner of our garden, — one that could be moved when Kolya should

have come to him, — and was soon deeply engrossed in the simple tasks in which erstwhile busy men sometimes find such keen delight. All day long he spaded and raked and planted, wrote letters home, and went on ever-lengthening walks; but evening brought him to our living-room where, beside the humming samovar, we swung the conversation round to his wild Caucasian tales.

The stories he told were not new; we had heard them all many times before. Accounts of his own trips in pathless mountains, adventures of the danger-loving Georgians, legends of his own people, the Armenians — they had lost not a shade of their interest in the years which had gone since those other winter evenings, when the sea raged just beyond the pasture-bars and made us crowd close to the fireplace and to him. Often, too, he talked of his children, but always it was of their life before Manya had waved her handkerchief from a window. Only of Russia itself he would not speak, nor would he read our Russian newspapers.

'Let her be,' he once said, 'the vampire! I ask only to forget.'

And we thought that he did forget, for the months brought to him an ever-deepening contentment. His shoulders were squaring themselves into old accustomed lines, the illness which had menaced gave no sign. Spring found him searching for a plot of land which would be his own, for Kolya had but two more years to serve.

III

And then, in the summer, came the war.

We translated the news to Babanchik — he had never finished learning his English. A smile twisted his mouth.

'Retribution!' he said; and there was something very

dreadful in his uplifted hand. 'I pray that Germany will destroy all Russia.'

We turned upon him in indignation. Under our accusing eyes his arm came down and hung limp by his side. He swung on his heel and left us, muttering as he went, —

'Nothing but German shells will ever break down her prisons.'

There followed the weeks and months of tense living. The Russian papers were filled with opportunities for the new work; names of old friends appeared in committee lists. As for us, we could but talk of it endlessly, and dream of it, wait for the morning paper, and talk again. We still saw Babanchik every day, but, every day, he mattered less. We could, and did, accept without comment his attitude toward the country which still held our affection, but, somehow, we had lost interest in his stories.

The war went on. The enemy was halted before Paris; the Russians swarmed over Prussia and were promptly driven back, far over their own boundary. Riga began to figure in the dispatches, and life seemed a solemn thing — so solemn that we had no time at all for noticing that something was very much amiss with Babanchik, until he said one evening, diffidently, —

'If you could ask your doctor to stop in — some day.'

We stared at him curiously. Why did he have that ghastly look about him? He was perfectly well only the day before — or was it last week — or was it a month ago? When was it that we had really looked at him? What had checked so suddenly the straightening of his shoulders? We could not say. But we were vaguely ashamed.

The doctor was terse and explicit.

'There is nothing wrong, chronically, save a general hardening of the arteries and a very high blood-pressure. He must have had bad news recently, a sorrow of some sort.'

'Nothing new,' I contradicted. 'He has been perfectly happy until now.'

'The war perhaps? or Russian reverses?'

'Oh,' I answered lightly, 'he cares nothing for the war, and Russian reverses would cause him no sorrow.'

The doctor left no medicine.

'Keep him amused,' he ordered, 'and don't let him grow excited. That is the only remedy.'

Keep him amused! With no thought in our minds, no word on our tongues which did not deal with the war, the war of which he never spoke, with which he had no concern!

It was the youngest brother who broke through our quandary.

' I think we have all been blind — and stupid! Babanchik never asks for war news. But why does he always happen to be about when the paper comes in the morning? Why does he never change the subject as long as we talk of the battles? Have n't you seen the embarrassed look on his face when Germany claims victory? And why did n't he need the doctor until Warsaw was endangered?'

Thus did we chance upon the truth. Though even then we were not certain — not until a letter, six months delayed, came to him from Kolya. Babanchik's hands shook when he laid it down.

'The little rat! What do you think he has done? He has sent a petition to the Tsar, the Tsar himself! To beg to be released from prison that he may join the army. He promises to go to the most dangerous position, to do the hardest work, if the Tsar will only set him free and let him fight. The blessed little rat!'

'Fight?' I asked, and looked Babanchik straight in the face, ' fight for Russia?'

The embarrassed look came into his eyes. But, even then, he did not at once capitulate.

'O my dear,' he replied, 'youth forgets so easily!'

After that it was not difficult to keep him amused. But to keep him from growing excited was not a task for human minds. Already he was fighting with Kolya. At night he lay awake, gleefully devising a thousand sly schemes whereby, single-handed, Kolya should take captive a hundred Germans; the days he spent in filling his letters to the boy with a detailed description of these schemes. Each morning we were introduced to marvels of unheard-of strategy, and called upon to translate from the newspaper every word of the long and conflicting dispatches. He was forgetting to eat, he had no time for exercise. An alarming shortness of breath followed, and we sent for the doctor again. The latter's visit was short, his opinion no less so: —

'If he continues to live at this tension he will not last until winter. Keep him quiet.'

And he left some pills.

And then came another letter from Kolya. I stepped into Babanchik's room a few minutes after he had read it and found him at his open window, staring out at the sky. He brushed his hands across his eyes before he turned and held out the letter to me.

'Read it, my dear.'

The uneven round handwriting was pathetically reminiscent of the letters which used to deal with ducks and puppies, and there was boyish heartbreak in every word of the curt, matter-of-fact sentences. Kolya's petition had not been granted.

'And now, father,' the letter ran on, 'you will have to come back. We are the men of our family. And, since the Tsar has decided that I must not help, the honor of that family rests with you. For, if you fail, I also fail.'

I looked up over the page. What could he do, a sick old man, in a country which was calling forth the finest of its

young strength? He answered my unspoken question, hastily.

'There is much for me. The wounded are coming home; I could read to them in the hospitals, and tell stories — you know how well I tell stories. And I can count cars — that is the logical work for one who had been so long with the road. Right in Tiflis I can count them, — supply-trains go out from there, — and release a younger man for the front. Will you get me a schedule of the sailings of Japanese steamers, my dear?'

So came his decision. At dinner-time he could not eat. Morning found him with a newspaper in his hand. Out of his meagre knowledge of English he was trying to decipher the flaming headlines. He waved away the suggestion of breakfast. Food interfered with his breathing, he said; but would we not bring in his trunks and suitcases? By afternoon he was shivering, and the tea I made for him failed to warm his hands. And once more we called the doctor.

He fought with all the strength which was left him, our gentle Babanchik, fought with tears of helpless fury coursing down his face, when we took him from the chaos of his packing and put him to bed. And a hard three months began for all of us.

It was a cold and cheerless autumn of early rains. The doctor came every day. And every day I sat at the bedside, translating to him Babanchik's entreaties and commands. I had procured for him the schedule of Japanese steamers, and he had marked the dates of their sailing with red ink.

'Tell him,' he would say, his unsteady forefinger on the first of these, 'that I must be fit for travel by this date. Tell him to give me more medicine — I shall take two pills every half hour. Tell him I cannot wait.'

And again, two or three days later, his finger back on the page, —

'There is no use in trying to catch this boat now. But tell him that the next one goes two weeks later. Surely he can cure me in two weeks; tell him that that's fourteen days.'

The weeks crept by and, one after another, the Japanese steamers sailed without him; but in his mind, which was slowly losing its clearness, a new hope dawned each day. I began to dread the hours beside his bed. It was hard to listen to the plans for his work which, under the stress of mounting fever, often trailed off to incoherent muttering, and to watch the thin profile of his face showing an ever sharper line against the pillow; hard to follow the doctor to his car and hear his passionless, hopeless words; harder still to go back and face the crazily bright eyes of Babanchik and, in response to his questions, lie cheerfully and so extravagantly that it seemed that only a madman could believe.

Yet he believed. For, one morning, I found him ruling a sheet of paper on a lapboard — he had fumed until the nurse had given him his pen. The vertical lines cut unsteadily across the page, and at the top of the columns he had written: —

'Date.' — 'Car Number.' — 'Destination.' — 'Cargo.'

'You see, my dear,' he explained eagerly, 'there will be a great deal of purely mechanical work, such as this, to be done, and much of it I can do beforehand. For I shall be too busy, in Tiflis, and I cannot expect an assistant at this time.'

On that day I did not go back to his room. The doctor's words had been fewer than usual, and there are times when one does not lie.

But, before bedtime, seeing his light burning, I tiptoed in. He stared dully.

'You have been talking long — I fell asleep waiting. And I wanted you to tell your doctor that I am losing all patience. If he cannot make me well enough to go at once, I shall find some other way to go — without his help. Keeping me in a warm room, the rain shut out, while my boys are lying in trenches! When I could be counting cars —' His breath failed him and he closed his eyes. Only when I looked back at him, with my hand on the door-knob, did he finish the sentence — 'for Russia.'

When again I saw him he was neither old nor feeble nor ill. By some untold magic he had become the undauntable Babanchik of twenty years ago. Only, his pongee suit had been very carefully pressed, and this, together with his unsmiling mouth, made him look strange — strange and a little forbidding, as if the way for which he had been searching was one with which we could have no concern. And, presently, one of the Japanese steamers was taking him back to Russia.

ROSITA

ELLEN MACKUBIN

THERE are secrets which are never told, mysteries which are never revealed, and questions which are never answered, even nowadays, when the press and the police so vigorously supplement the public and private interest in everybody's affairs. It is another evidence of the superior force of the natural human instincts to the mechanism of civilization, that in country villages or isolated garrisons, unpermeated by press or police, such phenomena are most rare. Yet even there they exist.

Fort Lawrence is a three-company post, possessing no neighbor, except a few scattered ranches, within a radius of several hundred miles. Thus thrown upon their own resources for amusement, the garrison's knowledge of one another's business is exhaustive, and events in these dull, peaceful days are picked as bare of detail as any bone acquired by some long-hungry dog. Yet at Lawrence occurred the following events, the inner relation of whose outward facts has never been fully understood.

A couple of years ago, Lawrence had been occupied for many months by three companies from the ——th Cavalry, though the chances of army promotion had recently brought it a commanding officer from another regiment. Major Pryor, a middle-aged man, who sheltered shyness behind a rampart of sternness, became immediately unpopular by tightening the reins of government, which his predecessor had held somewhat slackly. But the garrison and its feminine belongings were inclined to forgive him when they perceived that he had fallen seriously in love

with Rosita. Now, nobody had ever considered Rosita seriously before; not even her father, old Lawless the post-trader, in regard to whom the suspicion that he was a rascal had been condoned by the certainty that he was the jolliest of companions.

Old Lawless maintained complete silence as to his past; and as Rosita's mother formed part of that doubtful darkness when he, and his child, and his stock in trade installed themselves at Lawrence, he had never been heard to refer to her. That she had belonged to some mixed breed, part Spanish, part Indian, was, however, written on each feature of her daughter's body and mind — if Rosita could be said to have a mind.

'Every woman, savage or civilized, will love some day to her own sorrow,' her father had declared, with a cynical laugh. 'But Rosita's future is tolerably safe. Chocolate bonbons are her ruling passion, and as she has the digestion of an ostrich, many years will elapse before she is likely to suffer for her devotion!'

She was exceedingly pretty, with the beauty of bright eyes, lithe figure, and a complexion so transparent that the most enthusiastic admirer of fairness would not have wished her less dusky. Since she was fifteen she had held gay and undisputed sway among the younger officers; for Lawrence was so distant a post that feminine visitors were seldom seen there, and in those days the garrison families possessed only daughters in the nursery. The fame of her pretty looks and ways had become widespread among the frontier forts; yet it was noticeable that her admirers, while ransacking the realms of nature in eulogy of this gazelle, this kitten, this lark, never called her an angel, or even ascended high enough in the spiritual scale to compare her to a fairy, though there was nothing known of her at which the sternest army matron could take umbrage. She was as

ignorant of evil as any of the wild creatures with whose names she had been rebaptized, and Lawless kept a keen though seemingly careless eye upon her amusements.

With this girl Duncan Pryor did not flirt. Plain, prosaic, and forty, he loved her; while Rosita, instinctively discerning the difference between his behavior and that of her other admirers, appeared rather repelled than gratified — an attitude which became more obvious the more her father encouraged this serious suitor, and was presently explained, to the increasing interest of the spectators of the little drama, by the discovery that Rosita had developed another love than that for chocolates, and one which she concealed as slightly.

Gerald Breton, or 'Jerry,' as he was familiarly known, had, upon his first coming to Lawrence, devoted to Rosita's society every moment which he could spare from military duties that were not numerous; but in so doing he only fulfilled the manifest destiny of all his compeers at the post. He was a big, fair young fellow, with jovial Irish blood in his veins, and a smile which was perhaps more eloquent than he knew. Certainly, when he returned from a two months' 'leave,' he announced his engagement to the most adorable of women, met and won during his absence, with a frank assurance of congratulation which bespoke a conscience void of reproach.

Neither did Rosita reproach him. She preferred him to his brethren in a manner flattering to masculine vanity. And Jerry, having placed the colors of his *fiancée* in his helmet, did not hesitate to enjoy such amusement as was provided for him in a post that would have been dull without Rosita. She was comrade as charmingly as coquette. She rode hurdle-races, and shot at targets, and smoked cigarettes, as keenly as Jerry himself, while she could sing a love-song to her guitar, or dance to her castanets, with

a grace and a fervor that no music-hall star of a much-regretted civilization could surpass.

How soon Jerry guessed what it was that looked at him from under her long lashes, which was absent when she bestowed her fearless glances upon the other officers, is not made quite plain to his conscience yet. But he was promptly aware of Major Pryor's determination to prevent him from keeping engagements which brought him into the society of Rosita. No position of authority lends itself so readily to petty tyranny as that of a post-commander, when the incumbent is thus disposed; and that Pryor was thus disposed toward Lieutenant Breton, not only the victim, but Rosita particularly, and the garrison generally, quickly perceived. The adjutant, indeed, though a submissive person, ventured an occasional remonstrance concerning orders manifestly over-exacting, but won nothing by his presumption.

Was picnic or dinner arranged, at the last moment an orderly appeared, presenting the major's compliments and a special detail which required Lieutenant Breton's attention. When a much-talked-of fishing expedition, involving several nights' camping, was about to set forth, Jerry was appointed to the escort of some wagons just starting *en route* to the nearest river-town for supplies; while reproofs, irritably delivered and flagrantly undeserved, were a daily occurrence. Rosita's wrath, the jocular condolences of his chums, and the no less evident though wordless sympathy of his superiors added fuel to the smouldering fire of Jerry's resentment. Upon a certain radiant June afternoon this fire blazed.

A full-dress parade had been commanded, for the sole purpose, it was growled, of giving scope to the major's restless energies. Some trifling fault in the demeanor of Jerry's troop brought on him a scathing rebuke in the

presence of his men, of his comrades, and of the ladies who had gathered to watch such small display of military pomp as their position permitted. Temper conquered discipline. Instead of the silent salute which was his duty, Lieutenant Breton began an angry expostulation, and was sternly ordered to his quarters, under arrest for disrespect to the commanding officer.

Lawrence reveled in its sensation across that evening's supper-tables. Pryor was right, of course: Jerry had been guilty of grave misbehavior before the whole garrison. Yet love of justice is strong, even in the strictest enforcer of discipline—when the enforcer is Anglo-Saxon. If Jerry should refuse to apologize, or if Pryor should refuse to be thus appeased, the two captains resolved that private statements of the case should go to Washington before further complications should arise for the victim of a personal prejudice.

Jerry, however, in the solitary confinement of his own sitting-room, knew nothing of these plans, and faced a gloomy future through an infuriating present. Dear as his career was to him, he determined to sacrifice it rather than apologize to a man who, whatever his rank, was egregiously wrong. But even if his resignation were accepted under the circumstances of his breach of discipline, and he escaped court-martial, how could he justify to his home people the enmity of his commanding officer? Only by a story regarding its cause which he should feel himself a cad in the telling. And would his proud sweetheart accept the allegiance of the hero of such a story as unstained and unshaken?

When his wrath had cooled and his solitude remained undisturbed, Jerry began to feel forsaken as well as ill used. Tired of the perpetual turning which pacing his tiny quarters involved, he dropped disconsolately into a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

There was a rustle of petticoats, and, with dismayed assurance, he lifted his head. Yes, it was she, the pretty cause of his troubles, gazing at him with eyes that glowed through tears.

'Rosita!' he muttered, in a tone instinctively lowered, even in his surprise, for the sentry posted outside his door was probably within hearing. 'How did you get here?'

'By that window,' she answered, her white teeth gleaming as she nodded toward an open window that looked upon a rear veranda — a veranda which extended the length of 'officers' row,' where the post-trader had rented an unused set of quarters.

Suddenly she sank to her knees beside his chair, clasping both hands over one of his.

'He is a wicked man!' she cried passionately. 'I hate him!'

Jerry rose hurriedly, lifting her as he did so.

'Speak lower. You should not have come,' he said.

'Why should n't I come?' Rosita faltered, tears on her long lashes, her lips quivering like a child's. 'You are alone and in trouble.'

'Beastly trouble! It is awfully kind of you. By Jove!' he exclaimed, his outraged sense of propriety yielding place to a yet more wounded sense of his friends' desertion in this time of need; 'you are the only one of the lot who cares what happens to any fellow after he is down.'

'It is n't "any fellow." I care for you, Jerry,' she murmured wistfully. 'But he cannot hurt you, really? Just for to-night?'

'To-night!' he repeated, while discretion fled the field, routed by the rush of a vision of the probable consequences of his wrongs which swept over his soul. 'He intends to destroy my whole career. And he will do it, too, for I shall never apologize to him!'

Sympathy is none the less sweet when it shines in brilliant eyes, and he was not much more than a boy — a boy aghast in the presence of his first trouble. He grew eloquent while he described the gloomy future which Pryor's tyranny stretched before him.

'The long and short of it is that I am ruined through his confounded jealousy'—

He broke off his peroration abruptly, coloring hotly.

'You shall not be ruined! It is for my sake he hates you! But I will save you!' she panted.

'Nonsense!' he exclaimed, half touched, half anxious. 'You cannot get rid of Pryor; and as I cannot remain under his command without apology, I must resign — which will mean ruin for me,' he ended, with almost a groan of despondency.

She caught his hand, and pressed it to her breast, to her lips.

'Wait! Trust me!' she cried, running to the open window. 'He shall do you no more harm!'

Jerry, his pulses thrilling to those trembling kisses, followed her.

'Rosita! Sweetest — truest' — he gasped, 'you must not interfere! This matter concerns only Pryor and me. I forbid you!'

She turned when she had crossed the low ledge, and flashed a smile back to him — a smile which both bewildered and repelled him.

'You shall forbid me anything — except to serve you,' she said, and vanished among the shadows of the veranda.

For an instant he meditated pursuit, but gave it up as he remembered the complications which would ensue should he be seen in apparent attempt to evade his arrest.

Rosita was a dear little ignoramus, embarrassingly fond of him, he told himself, grasping at his usual common sense,

which was perplexed by vague alarm. Yet surely she could intend nothing more than to make a pretty scene as special pleader for his cause with Pryor — a pleader who, unless that officer had utterly lost dignity, would produce no other effect than to embitter the jealousy which was the foundation of this persecution.

Fort Lawrence goes to bed early. By eleven o'clock sleep apparently possessed the garrison, with the exception of the widely scattered sentinels who cried the hour. But the clear calls had scarcely died upon the vast surrounding stillness of the prairie night when they were succeeded by the sharp, unmistakable report of a pistol-shot.

Jerry Breton, lounging, half-awake, beside the veranda window of his sitting-room, was roused to full consciousness and a pang of foreboding.

The report came from a path which skirted the rampart immediately beneath the veranda, at a point where the bluff beyond descended so abruptly into the Yellowstone River, hundreds of feet below, that the sentry rarely patrolled it, ingress or egress being impossible to any one in a sane mood. Jerry sprang down the veranda steps, assuring himself that there might be a dozen comparatively harmless reasons for the shot, and that his terror was merely nightmare. Yet when he beheld the body of a man prostrate, face forward, across the path, he knew him, with a knowledge that anticipated sight. Shrinkingly he bent over him, uttered a half-strangled cry, which was dismayed, not surprised, and picked up a pistol, a tiny silver-mounted toy, horribly incongruous beside that ghastly, motionless figure — a dainty, deadly thing that Jerry had given months before to the 'best markswoman in the Northwest.'

There was a swift rush of footsteps from various directions: the sentry to whose beat this stretch of rampart be-

longed, another sentry from his station before the door of Jerry's quarters, and three or four partly clad officers roused out of their slumbers.

Jerry stood upright — a slight, erect figure, whose silhouette was distinct against the blue moonlit sky. He swung his arm above his head, and flung the pistol far over the edge of the bluff.

The next instant he was surrounded by a crowd; a tumult of exclamation and question arose, as Pryor's inanimate body was recognized, and carefully examined for some sign of life. In the midst of the tumult he leaned against the rampart, neither speaking nor apparently hearing, until Blount, the captain of his troop, laid an admonitory hand on his shoulder.

'You were here first — Don't stare like an idiot! Tell us what you saw.'

'Is he dead?'

'We cannot be sure until the surgeon comes. Did you see any one?'

Jerry shuddered visibly.

'I saw nobody!'

'The major has been queer lately, poor chap. Perhaps he shot himself,' Blount suggested eagerly.

'Was not that a pistol you threw away?' another officer asked sharply.

Jerry lifted his eyes. Those familiar faces were pale and stern.

'You saw' — he faltered.

'Speak, lad!' Blount entreated.

'I cannot talk. I must have time to think.'

'The truth does n't need thinking. It requires plain telling.'

There ensued a silence, through which creaked the hurried approach of the surgeon's boots.

Jerry's fair head drooped; he caught uncertainly at Blount's arm.

'I have nothing to say,' he muttered faintly.

Blount, who, as senior captain, succeeded to Pryor's command in case of that officer's death or incapacity, turned from his young subordinate.

'Sergeant Jackson,' he said, in a voice that was not quite steady, 'take Lieutenant Breton to his quarters. You will be responsible for him until further instructions.' Then he knelt beside Pryor, over whom the surgeon was bending. 'Is there life in him?' he asked.

There was life in him — life that lingered after they had carried him to his bed and his wound had been dressed; a mere spark of life, which might flicker out at any moment, although, the major being a healthy man, in the prime of years, it might yet blaze up again into strength. Such was the surgeon's unchanging report during the next two days to the post, where horror of the tragedy in its midst had silenced gossip, and where even conjecture held its breath.

There is thus much resemblance between a small garrison and a family, that the befalling of a calamity to one of their number softens all judgments; quarrels, criticisms, envyings, are the corrupted fruit of a too brilliant sunshine. Pryor had been unpopular, but only kindness was spoken of him now that it seemed probable that he lay dying. If there was a manifest desire, especially among the ladies, to foster a suspicion that his evident wretchedness had led him to attempt suicide, the desire merely expressed their hope that Jerry Breton's innocence might be proved, in spite of the young fellow's stunned passiveness and his strange flinging away of the pistol.

Proof either of guilt or of innocence depended vitally on Pryor's recovery, as no inquiry had elicited any of the

facts which preceded the catastrophe of that night. Shortly after ten o'clock the commanding officer had passed the sentry for a solitary stroll along the rampart, which was a daily habit with him; nobody else had been seen, and nothing unusual had been heard until the pistol-shot.

Depression, black as the shadow of death which overhung them, possessed the little post which was wont to be so cheery. No one was surprised to hear that Rosita had been added to the number of the surgeon's patients, nor did any one doubt the cause of the nervous collapse from which he declared her to be suffering, and which forced him to veto Mrs. Blount's offer of a visit to her. Lawless, he said, had miraculously developed into the most perfect of nurses, and Rosita, with the tendency to delirium that belongs to volatile and undisciplined temperaments, was better off under his undisturbed attendance.

Closely confined to his quarters, Jerry Breton knew nothing of her illness, and each hour of her silence, after he believed that she must be aware of his position, buried deeper his hope that she would confess when she discovered that he had assumed the suspicion of her mad crime. With bitterness he reflected that the devotion of so fantastic a creature was no more to be trusted than her moral principles; and bound though he felt himself to shelter her, he yearned for the happiness and honor she alone could restore to him.

Whether Pryor lived or died, his own career must end in a darkness whose varying degrees seemed to Jerry scarcely worth remark. This story of treacherous vengeance would be told to his own people, and to the woman he loved. Oh, God! How his soul adored her purity, her pride, the girlish exaltation for which he had used to profess a tender ridicule! Had he been cruelly unjust to her, and to those others who were dear to him? Yet would he not have been

unutterably base had he crawled to safety across the condemnation of Rosita, whose crime had resulted from misguided love for him?

Like most of his compeers, Jerry had a character which was one of action rather than of thought. In the sleepless thought of those forty-eight hours his boyishness slipped from him forever, and he attained the full stature of his manhood — God help us! — as most of humanity does so attain in the forcing-house of suffering!

Twilight had come the second time when Captain Blount knocked at the door of Jerry's quarters.

'I think the lieutenant is asleep — and it's the first rest he has had, sir' — Jackson hesitated.

'I've news for him that he will like better than sleeping! His arrest is over!' Blount cried, entering.

Jerry lay back, unawakened, in the only armchair the unluxurious room possessed. Blount stared down at the haggard young face, with a blending of affection and resentment which made a very complete perplexity. Not until he touched the sleeper's shoulder did the heavy lids lift slowly.

'I've nothing to say,' Jerry murmured half consciously.

'I am sure of it, you donkey! Pryor, however, has said something, and the whole crowd of us must beg your pardon, though you have yourself to blame that we suspected you.'

'Pryor has spoken? What does he say?'

'The surgeon will not let him talk; but he insisted on hearing who was accused, and he acquitted you at once. Now I want you to tell me what confounded quixotism kept you silent, at such cost, if, as seems probable from his despondency, he attempted his own life.'

Jerry frowned, and looked away into the gathering shadows.

'Despondent is he, poor chap?' he asked presently.

'Even less thankful to be alive than you seem to be free again.'

Jerry sat upright, his pale face flushing, his eyes shining.

'I? Not thankful?' he cried in a voice shaken to the verge of an utter breakdown. 'I have been in hell these two days, and you have brought me out — but — but — go away, Blount, or I shall make a fool of myself!'

Lieutenant Breton was breakfasting late the next morning, when Pryor's orderly appeared with an immediate summons to the commanding officer's presence, War, armed *cap-à-pie*, sprang into existence in Jerry's heart at this summons. He had proved Pryor capable of tyranny without reason, and could not hope, when the spirit of such a man had been as cruelly wounded as his body, that he would incline to mercy. But in the blessedness of his own safety he forgave Rosita her silence, and, while aware of the perplexities that would beset him, he vowed that no admission of her guilt should be extorted from him.

There was, however, neither wrath nor challenge in the hollow eyes which confronted him when he stood beside Pryor's bed, and a gaunt hand feebly moved across the counterpane toward him.

'You are a fine fellow, Breton,' the major murmured. 'I beg your pardon!'

Jerry dumbly clasped the quivering fingers.

'They have told me that you flung a pistol over the bluffs,' Pryor continued slowly. 'Of course I know whose pistol it was. But I wish you to understand that the shooting was my fault, like the whole affair. I provoked her with words I had no right to speak; I denied her the mere justice she demanded. Except for your courage I should have brought disgrace upon her, as I have brought death.'

'Death? Rosita?'

'She died last night.'

Jerry dropped into a chair. Death! Rosita! — a creature so instinct with the life of this world that it was impossible to conceive her in the life of which death is the portal.

'Did she — ' He shuddered.

'No! She never rallied from the shock of that night. Her father has been here to ask me to forgive the dead. My God! I shall not forgive myself!' Pryor cried, with an anguish none the less intense for the faintness of the voice which uttered it.

Jerry had covered his face, and the other stared enviously at the tears that slipped through his fingers.

'Time is up!' the surgeon exclaimed from outside the closed door.

The eyes of the two men met wistfully.

'I have deserved no favor from you,' Pryor muttered; 'neither is it for my sake that I entreat you to continue silent. There will be no further inquiry into the matter, as the surgeon tells me that I shall recover. So the garrison must be satisfied only with conjecture as to my temporary madness and your magnanimity.'

'It is you who are magnanimous!'

'I loved her; I persecuted her! The death she desired for me was mercy compared to the life which is all the atonement I can make to her memory.'

With which exceeding bitter whisper Pryor turned himself to the wall.

Out on the parade, the radiant freshness of the prairie morning thrilled Jerry's young veins with an ecstasy of living, and a sharp pang of compassion stabbed his heart.

Misguided, bewitching, — ah, yes, and loving, — Rosita lay dead in the midst of the summer gladness that seemed akin to her. He pulled his cap over his eyes, and, ignoring

some cordial greetings, walked hurriedly to the post-trader's quarters. Presently Lawless came to him in the little drawing-room, which was unfamiliarly dark and still.

'God bless you!' he said, laying a hand on Jerry's shoulder. 'Those words do not mean much to me. I've wished they did since last night. But you will understand from them that I am grateful. Hush! I have nothing to forgive you. Nor had she. Will you come to see her? She never knew that you were shielding her, or she would have confessed; and she wished you to see her — if she looked pretty.'

Pretty, indeed! Poor flower of a people Christianized just enough to suffer for the savage instincts they do not learn to control! She lay with a crucifix between the hands which seemed so childish, and were so guilty.

'Remember her like this,' Lawless continued. 'Remember, too, that she loved you; not as the women of our race love, when nature is subdued by civilization and ruled by religion, but with the limitless love of a squaw for her chief, knowing neither right nor wrong in her devotion to him. For under her daintiness and her sweetness Rosita was a squaw.'

Across her grave three men kept silence. There is another regiment at Lawrence now, and when the ——th Cavalry remember what they beheld of this story, they glance at their quiet major with wonder for his fleeting madness. Only the surgeon and one or two ladies murmur to their own thoughts, 'Rosita?'

PERJURED

BY EDITH RONALD MIRRIELEES

A lie well stuck to —

It began with no more than a word, such as a man might speak and forget he had spoken. At the time of speaking, Robbins Nelson was standing with a group of other youths — lads in their late 'teens and early twenties — on the Sutro Station platform. All their eyes were on the approaching train, and all their tongues were busy with a single topic.

Robbins was the youngest member of the group — barely turned sixteen. Usually he hung somewhat unregarded on its edge, but to-day, bold in the possession of first-hand knowledge, he thrust himself into the heart of the talk.

'I looked right down on him, close as I am to you. I was walking along over that cut where the train comes through. Gee, his head looked three-cornered! I yelled, but the engineer did n't know what I meant. Anyhow, they would n't have stopped — nothing but a hobo.'

'No good if they had,' an older speaker took up the words. 'He was done for. Did n't speak but once after they got him off. "Don't hit me," he says. I s'pose when they run into the tunnel and whatever it was jammed into him — '

'He did n't get hurt in any tunnel,' Robbins asserted. The color flared into his face with the intensity of his conviction. The horrid memory of the man set him to blinking. 'He could n't get hurt if he was lying down, could he? And if he was standing up, it'd knock him off, would n't it? It was n't any tunnel —'

He broke off, aware suddenly of the smiling ridicule in the faces round him. Grotend, brother-in-law to the coroner who had held the inquest, laughed good-temperedly.

'Go it, William J. Burns, Junior! I s'pose some fancy murderer crawled up on top between stations. Or he got jolted down out of an air-ship. It'd take something like that —'

Grotend was popular with the group. Their ready laughter rewarded the attack. And the younger boy's crimson misery was an invitation to further teasing.

'You had n't ought to be stingy with bright ideas like that, Nelse. He sent you an anonymous letter, did n't he? Or maybe you saw a man in a black mask beating him up —'

'No, I did n't!' said Robbins loudly. He cast about desperately in his mind for a means of escape. 'I did n't see anybody beating him up, but I saw Jim Whiting coming down off the end of the car.'

A hush followed his statement — a tribute to the weight of it. Grotend, his lips parted for a fresh jibe, drew in his breath sharply as though in the shock of a cold douche. Then, —

'You saw Jim Whiting?' he reiterated.

Jim Whiting was brakeman on the local freight, a figure familiar enough to all of them.

'Getting deaf, are n't you?' Robbins retorted.

He turned his back upon his tormentors and walked away across the platform.

He was not much impressed with the importance of his lie. Chiefly, he was elated that there had come to him a lie suitable to turn the tables. Half-way home his elation lasted, to be crowded out only by the recurring memory of the injured tramp. The boy had never before seen violent death. The picture of the man as he sped past, bloody and

misshapen, on the swaying car-top; the later picture of him borne up the street on the improvised stretcher, came back upon him hideously. That for such destruction, for such wanton suffering, there should be no punishable agent, seemed intolerable. And the idea once presented, who so likely as Whiting —

He heard the beat of footsteps behind him, and Grotend, breathing quickly, swung into pace at his side.

'I been trying to catch up with you,' he explained unnecessarily. 'Say, when Jim come out on the platform, I spoke to him. I says, "One of the fellows says he saw you up on top that day the tramp got hurt." And you'd ought to seen him. I guess he knew —'

'What'd he say?' Robbins interrupted.

'All he says was, "You tell that fellow he's a liar"; but if you'd seen the look on him —'

'Don't you tell him I said it,' the younger boy cautioned. 'I don't want him down on me.' A belated stir of conscience set him to hedging. 'Anyhow, I did n't say I saw him up on the car. All I saw was when he was just there on those iron steps on the side. I don't know if he was going up or down.'

They stood at the Nelson gate for a little, talking. It was full dark when Robbins went up the shrub-lined path to the porch. In the lighted dining-room his mother and the younger children were already at supper.

'Late, Robbins,' Mrs. Nelson admonished as he slid into his place. Then, catching sight of his face, 'Tired out? If it's that accident that's worrying you —'

'It's not,' the boy denied. He felt his cheeks grow hot with a sudden flush of annoyance. 'I don't see what I'd worry about that for. Only, Charlie Grotend told Mr. Whiting I saw him on the car that day, and it made Whiting mad. I was wishing he had n't.'

'You did n't say anything more than that — that he could have helped it, or anything like that? Well, then!' She put the discussion aside with a gesture. 'Merle Williams telephoned to see if you'd come over there to-night. You might as well. There's no use brooding —'

'I'm *not!*' Robbins flung back angrily.

His spirits lightened somewhat in the process of dressing for his outing. They lightened still more when, on his way to the place of entertainment, he came up with three or four of his mates similarly bound, and went on with them, easily the hero of the little group. Sutro, though a county seat, was a place of few excitements. The finding of the injured tramp, his death, the inquest, which had been held that day, were topics of surpassing interest, and Robbins, by virtue of his momentary contact, found his importance measurably enhanced. Before the evening was over, he had told his story a half-dozen times, each time with less repulsion, with a keener sense of its dramatic value.

'I was walking along the cut — you know, there where the train goes under you — and I saw him and yelled at the engineer to stop. I thought he was dead already — he looked like it. I don't know what I yelled for, only I thought he'd roll off. No, I did n't say I saw Whiting up on top, —' He adhered scrupulously to the form of his first telling, — 'I saw him on those steps on the side. I 'd called to him, too, if I'd seen him in time, but I did n't.'

'I bet he'd have understood,' suggested one of the listeners.

There was something cynical, something appalling, in the fashion in which their untempered youth seized upon the idea of guilt as the concomitant of injury. Robbins, tramping home a half-hour after midnight, felt all round him the concurrence of his mates — a warm supporting wave. He was committed beyond retreat now to his theory. Almost

he was self-deceived. Visualizing the scene, he could scarcely have said whether, actually, he saw Whiting's big body flattened against the side of the car, or whether he himself had superimposed the detail.

He slept late next morning, and emerging, discovered his mother, red-eyed, moving restlessly between kitchen and dining-room. She called to him as he came out, but it was not until he was seated before his oven-dried breakfast that, with a long breath, as though she braced herself, —

'Mrs. Cartwright was here this morning,' she observed.

The words were indifferent, but the tone was so full of significance that instinctively the boy stopped eating to listen.

'She'd been sitting up last night with Mrs. Morgan. Robbins, that boy — that poor boy — was n't a tramp at all. He was Charlie Morgan, trying to beat his way back home.'

'How'd they know?' Robbins asked.

'Something about the body. There was some mark. It's dreadful for his mother. And it's worse because she thinks — Mrs. Cartwright says a good many people think — it was n't an accident at all. The wound don't look like it. And then your seeing Mr. Whiting —'

'What'd you tell her that for?' Robbins muttered.

He pushed back his chair, his hunger vanished as if from feasting.

'I did n't. She told me. She says that man who has the truck-garden — Emerson, is n't it? — is saying he saw Mr. Whiting on the car-roof and recognized him. But, of course, a man like that —'

Her tone disposed effectually of the second witness. She got to her feet and began to gather up the dishes from the table.

'Mrs. Cartwright says Mr. Cartwright's looking into the

thing. In his position, he'd have to. I told her you'd go up to his office.' She was passing behind Robbins's chair as she spoke. To his amazement, she stooped and laid her cheek for an instant against his shoulder. 'Don't you let him worry you, Robbie. You just stick to your story,' she counseled.

'I'm not going near him,' Robbins declared defiantly.

More than the hush of appreciation at his first statement, more than the news of Whiting's anger, his mother's unexpected caress impressed upon him the seriousness of his position.

When he left the house, breakfast ended, he was fixed in his determination neither to get within reach of Cartwright, who was county attorney, nor to repeat his story. But once upon the street he found to his consternation that the story no longer needed his repetition. It traveled on every tongue, growing as it went. Nor was there lacking other evidence to support it. The examining physician shook his head over the shape and nature of the fatal wound; the helpers who had carried the man were swift to recollect his dying words. From somewhere there sprang the rumor of long-standing feud between Whiting and Charlie Morgan. Then it was no more a rumor but an established fact — time, place, and enhancing circumstances all known and repeated.

'Enough to hang anybody,' Grotend summed up the evidence, following with his coterie the trend of gossip. 'Only thing is, it's funny the sort of people that do all the hearing and seeing.' He put his arm round Robbins's shoulders. 'There's Nelse here and Doc. Simpson — they're all right; but look at the rest of 'em — If they said it was a nice day, I'd know it was raining. Take that Emerson fellow —'

'Well, if Nelse saw him on the side, I don't see why

Emerson could n't see him up on top; he must 'a' been there,' a listener protested. And Robbins, his throat constricted, drew out of hearing.

For the most part, however, he found a lively satisfaction in the increase of rumor. In such a mass of testimony, he reasoned, his own bit of spurious evidence was wholly unimportant. When that day and a second and still a third had passed with no demand upon him, his oppression vanished. Even the news of Whiting's arrest did not greatly disturb him. There was now and then a minute of sick discomfort, — once when the truck-gardener attempted to hob-nob with him on the strength of their common information; once and more acutely when an overheard conversation warned him that the accused man was depending on an alibi, — but for the most part he put the danger of discovery resolutely out of his mind. Even should the alibi be forthcoming and his own story go thereby to the ground, 'They can't be sure about it,' he comforted himself. 'They can't know I did n't —' Even in his thought he left the phrase unfinished.

It was the fourth day after Whiting's arrest that, going toward home in the early evening, he heard his name spoken from behind, and turning, saw the county attorney. His first barely inhibited impulse was toward flight, but it was already too late for that. The elder man's greeting detained him as by a hand upon his arm. He halted reluctantly, and they went on side by side.

The county attorney was a man in his early sixties — a tall stooping figure, gray-haired, with an habitual courtesy of manner which, more than irascibility, intimidated his younger neighbors. It was a part of his courtesy, now, to begin far-off from the subject at hand, in an effort, foredoomed to failure, to put his auditor at ease.

'I often watch you tall boys going past, and remind my-

self that I am getting old. I can remember most of you in your carriages. Indeed, with you, your father and I were law students together. And now you're in high school, your mother tells me.' And with hardly a shift of tone, 'She tells me, too, — or rather my wife does, — that you were unfortunate enough to see Mr. Whiting on the day of poor Morgan's death. I am sorry —'

'I — did n't see him do anything,' Robbins protested. His tongue was suddenly thick and furry, and the words came with difficulty. 'Nothing I could swear to. He was just — there.'

He was staring straight ahead; he could not see how shrewd were the kindly eyes which measured him.

'Timid,' the lawyer was labeling his witness. 'Sensitive. Over-scrupulous. He'd scruple his testimony out of existence.'

Aloud he spoke with grave reassurance. 'Your merely seeing Mr. Whiting can do him no harm. Indeed, you may not be needed at all. The preliminary examination having been waived —' He paused for a moment before the Nelson gate, his thin-featured old face remote and serious. 'In any case, remember this, my boy. Nothing is ever required of you on the witness stand except to tell your story exactly as you have told it off the stand. In the end the truth will come out and no innocent man be harmed.'

He congratulated himself as he went on up the street that he had reassured the lad, put before him his irresponsibility in its true light. Had he looked back, he might have seen the reassured witness staring after him in a kind of horror of amazement. To Robbins it was as if, astoundingly, an outsider had voiced the thought of his own heart. That truth must prevail, that false witnesses would be brought to confusion — it was a belief ingrained into the

fibre of his being. He was sick with a premonition of disgrace.

'Only, they can't *know*,' he tried to hearten himself. 'I can stick to it I did.' He stood still a moment, the line of his sensitive chin grown suddenly hard. 'And I've got to stick to it,' he warned himself. 'I've got to stick it out as long as I live.'

It did not need the county attorney's advice to keep him away from the court-room during the opening days of the trial. With all the youthful masculinity of Sutro crowding the courthouse steps, Robbins sat at home in the hot, darkened parlor, reading from books pulled down at random, seeing always, no matter what he read, a room set thick with eyes—eyes scornful, eyes reproachful, eyes speculative.

When at last the ordeal came, it was so much less dreadful than his anticipation of it that he was conscious of an immediate relief. There was, indeed, a minute of blind confusion as he made his way toward the stand — voices singing in his ears, a blue mist before his eyes. Then, somehow, he was sworn and seated, and all round him were the friendly faces of neighbors. He could see the judge nod encouragement to him over his desk; he could see the bracing kindness of the county attorney's glance. Whiting he could not see, the bowed shoulders of a reporter intervening.

He was scarcely nervous after the first moments. His story flowed from him without effort, almost without volition. 'I was walking along the track — I'd been fishing —' It seemed to him that he had said the words a million times.

There were interruptions now and then; objections; questions from a round-faced, deep-voiced youngster, who, Robbins divined presently, was Whiting's lawyer; but all of it — the narrative, the pauses, the replies — came with the

regular, effortless movement of well-oiled machinery. He could have laughed at the puerile efforts of the defense to break down his story. — 'Was he sure that he knew James Whiting?' Was there a resident of Sutro who did not know him? 'Could he swear, — taking thought that he was under oath, — could he *swear* that the man on the side of the car was James Whiting and not some other man resembling him? If, on a moving train, another man resembling James Whiting, of about James Whiting's size — '

'He knows he can't touch me,' Robbins was thinking triumphantly. 'He knows it!'

The question of truth or falsehood was quite removed from him now. He came down from the stand finely elated, and in the afternoon went back of his own accord to the court-room. Emerson, the truck-gardener, was under examination and faring badly. One by one, the damaging facts of his past came out against him — an arrest for theft, a jail sentence for vagrancy, a quarrel with the prisoner, proved threats. The victim emerged limp from the ordeal, and slunk away from the room, wholly discredited.

'Serves him right, though,' Robbins quenched his momentary pity. 'I knew all the time he was lying.' He started suddenly, so violently that the listener seated next him turned in irritation. 'And,' it had flashed through his mind, 'and he knew I was!'

His eyes sought the prisoner — the man who also knew — where he sat hunched heavily forward in his chair, his arms upon the table. For an instant, pity, like some racking physical pain, shot through Robbins. To be caught in such a web! To be caught through no fault of his own! It was the first time the purely personal side had broken its way past his own selfish concern. It stifled him and, forcing his eyes from the man's brooding face, he got up and stumbled out of the room.

But he could not stay out. An indefinite dread dragged him back presently. An indefinite dread held him bound to his place during the examination of the witnesses who followed, during the days of argument, and the judge's inconclusive charge. He lay awake on the night following the jury's retirement, picturing over and over in his own mind the scene of their return — just what degree of astonishment his face should show in listening to their verdict, with just what proud reticence and conscious wrong he should make his way out from the crowd. He had never said that Whiting was guilty — he reminded himself of that. All he had ever said was that on one certain day, in one certain place — He rolled over on his face and, hands across his eyes, tried vainly to sleep.

Half of Sutro was loafing about the court-house lawn next morning, pushing its way into the corridors at every rumor, drifting back to the freer outer air. When at last the rumor proved a true one, Robbins found himself far in the back of the room, the wall behind him, on three sides a packed, jostling crowd. There was a blur of unintentional noise in the place — heavy breathing, the creaking of a door. Through the noise pierced at intervals the accustomed voice of the judge, and set between the intervals the mumble of the foreman's reply.

'— Agreed, all of you?'

'Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?'

The mumble dropped lower still. A stir swept over the front of the room, a wave of voiceless interest passing from front to back.

'What — what —' Robbins stammered, straining higher on tiptoe.

'Guilty. Manslaughter,' said the man beside him. He brought his hand down heavily on the boy's shoulder. 'Suits you all right. Everybody knew —'

The gavel sounded and he broke off, bending forward to listen.

But Robbins did not listen. It was as though the foundations of his world crumbled round him. That truth should fail, that innocent men should suffer — He fumbled at the sleeve of the man on the other side.

'I — did n't hear. They said —'

'Sh-h!' the man warned him, and then, behind his sheltering hand, 'Guilty.'

The judge's voice dropped, and the speaker began moving with others toward the door. Robbins moved, too — as one dazed, uncertain what he did. Some one stopped him in the outer passage. He was conscious of congratulatory sentences. He heard his own voice speaking words which, seemingly, were not without meaning. And all the while his mind waited, awed, for the impending catastrophe.

Mercifully, the house was empty when he reached home. He tiptoed into his own room, and there, the door closed behind him, stood for a moment, listening. Then, with an exclamation, he dropped to his knees beside the bed and buried his face against it.

For an hour he knelt there, bodily quiet, his mind beating, circling, thrusting desperately against its surrounding cage of falsehood. At first it was all fear — how the exposure would come, how best he might sustain himself against it. Then, imperceptibly, a deeper terror crept into his thinking. Suppose it should not come? Suppose — But that was unthinkable. For a lie to blast a man's whole life, for a lie to brand him. Stealthily, as if his very stirring might incense the devil-god of such a world, he slid down, sitting beside the bed, his distended, horror-fascinated eyes hard on the wall. In these minutes his young faith in God and justice fought to the death with the injustice before him — fought and won.

'He'll be sentenced Friday,' he found himself thinking, drawing on some half-heard scrap of conversation. 'That's four days. There's time enough —'

He dragged himself up and lay down at full length. Something hot smarted upon his face; he put up his hand to find his cheeks wet with tears. They flowed quietly for a long time — soothingly. He fell asleep at last, his lashes still heavy with them.

He was very early at the court-house Friday morning. Cartwright, coming in at nine to his office, crossed the corridor to speak to him — cheerily.

'Well, we got our man, Robbins. You made a good witness — I meant to tell you so before; no confusing you. Look here, my boy, you're not fretting over this? If it had n't been you, it would have been some one else. There's no covering a crime like that.'

'Not — ever?' said Robbins thickly.

His secret was at his tongue's end. A glance of interrogation would have brought it spilling out. But there was no interrogation in his companion's eyes — only an abstracted kindness. He looked away from the lad toward the stragglers along the corridor.

'You came up to hear the sentence? Come in through my office and we'll find you a seat. The place will be packed.'

'There's nothing new?' Robbins asked unwillingly. 'No — new evidence?'

'Why, no! The case will be closed in another half-hour. And then I hope it will be a long time before you have any thing to do with a criminal charge again. Now if you want to come in —'

Robbins followed, silent. It did not trouble him to find himself placed conspicuously in the front row. His whole attention was set upon holding fast to the one strand of

hope extended to him. In half an hour it would be over. In half an hour the hideous thing would be folded into the past. But it would *not!* The case against Whiting would be ended, the arraignment of God would be but just begun! To go on living in a world so guardianed—

The judge entered and took his place; the lawyers on either side filed in to their stations about the long table; the prisoner was brought in, in the custody of a deputy sheriff. There was a little bustle of curiosity to herald his coming. Then the packed room settled to attention.

Robbins leaned forward in his seat. He heard vaguely the opening interchanges of speech. He saw the prisoner rise. The man was clay-colored; his teeth scraped back and forth continually on his dry lower lip. There was no resource in him, no help. And suddenly the watcher knew that help was nowhere. The voice of the judge reached him, low-pitched and solemn, as befitted the occasion.

'— Having been found guilty — decree that you be confined —'

'*No!*' said Robbins suddenly almost in a scream.

All at once the thing was clear to him. It was not Whiting who was being sentenced: it was God who was on trial, it was truth, good faith, the right to hope.

The impulse of his cry had wrenched him from his chair. He stood flung forward against the rail.

'You can't! I never saw him! They were tormenting me and I said I did. He was n't there —'

Behind him the court-room rang with excitement. He was aware of startled exclamations. He was aware of Cartwright, tragic-eyed, beside him, half-sheltering him, calling to him.

'Robbins! What's wrong? He's not speaking under oath. He 's been brooding —'

'It's *so!*' said the boy.

For a moment he held himself erect among them, high-headed, joyous, splendid with the exaltation of the martyr. Then, suddenly, his eyes met the eyes of the prisoner. He dropped back into his seat, his shaking hands before his face.

It had lasted a second, less than a second, that frank, involuntary revelation; but in that second, his guard beaten down by sheer amazement, the prisoner's guilt stood plain in his face. In that second, reading the craven record of it, Robbins saw the glory of martyrdom snatched from him forever — knew himself, now and now only, irrevocably perjured.

WHAT MR. GREY SAID

BY MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE

He was the smallest blind child at Lomax, the State school for deaf and blind children. Even Jimmie Little, who looked like a small gray mouse, and who had always been regarded by the teachers as not much bigger than a minute, appeared large beside Stanislaus. He was so small, in fact, that Mr. Lincoln, the Superintendent, had declined at first to admit him.

'We don't take children under six,' he had said to Stanislaus's father when the latter had brought him to Lomax, 'and your little boy does n't look five yet.'

'He'll be five the twenty-second of March,' the father said.

'I'll be five ve twenty-second of March,' Stanislaus echoed.

He was sitting holding his cap politely between his knees, swinging his fat legs with a gay serenity, while his blind eyes stared away into the dark. He had not been paying much attention to the conversation, being occupied with the working out of a little silent bit of rhythm by an elaborate system of leg-swings: twice out with the right foot; twice with the left; then twice together. He had found that swinging his legs helped to pass the time when grown-ups were talking. The mention of his birthday, however, brought him at once to the surface. That was because Mr. Grey had told him of a wonderful thing which would happen the day he was five. Thereafter his legs swung to the accompaniment of a happy unheard chant: —

'I'll be five years old' (right leg out),
'I'll be five years old' (left leg out),
'I'll be five years old on my *birf*-day!'

(Both legs in ecstatic conjunction.)

Stanislaus's father, a sad-eyed man, who, though he spoke with no accent, was evidently of emigrant extraction, looked troubled.

'My wife's dead,' he said, 'an' I'm workin' in the coal-mines, an' you know that ain't no place for a little blind child. Every one told me sure you'd take him here.'

Mr. Lincoln hesitated. 'Well,' he said at length, 'I'll send for Miss Lyman, — she's the matron for the blind boys, — and if she consents to take him, I'll make no objection.'

Miss Lyman appeared presently, and Mr. Lincoln explained the situation.

'But he is such a little chap,' he concluded, 'it seems hardly possible for us to take him.'

Here, however, Stanislaus gave over his leg-swinging and took it upon himself to remonstrate.

'I *ain't* little,' he said firmly. Slipping off his chair, he drew himself up very straight, and began patting himself all over. 'Feel me,' he urged, 'dest feel me, I'm weally big. Feel my arms,' he held these chubby members out to Miss Lyman. 'An' my *legs*, —' he patted them, — 'why ve're *aw*-ful big!' His serious little mouth rounded itself to amazement at the bigness of his legs.

It was beyond human nature, or at least beyond Miss Lyman's nature, to resist the appeal of his eager voice and patting baby hands. Obediently she ran an inquiring touch over his soft body, which was still plump babyhood, not having as yet thinned to boyhood.

'Why,' she said, turning gravely to Mr. Lincoln, 'he does *look* rather small, but when you *feel* him, you find he is really quite big.'

'Does he feel big enough for us to take?' Mr. Lincoln demanded.

'Oh, I think so!' she answered quickly, one arm slipping about the little boy's shoulders.

'An' I'll be five ve twenty-second of March,' Stanislaus threw in to overbalance the argument in his favor.

He snuggled himself confidingly against Miss Lyman, and fell to playing with the many jingling attachments of her chatelaine.

'I heard vese tinkly fings when you was comin' 'w-a-y a-w-a-y outside, 'fore you o-pened ve door,' he murmured softly.

'His mother 's dead,' the man explained.

'Little sister's dead, too,' Stanislaus supplemented him. 'S'e token a awful bad cold so s'e could n't b'eave. I take awful bad colds, but I don't die, do I?' he demanded.

'Yes,' said the man, 'my baby's dead, too. I had a woman lookin' after both kids, but she let the baby git the pneumonia.'

'I fink I like you better van vat other lady,' Stanislaus confided to Miss Lyman.

'Of course we can take him,' Miss Lyman said hastily to Mr. Lincoln.

And thus it was that Stanislaus came to Lomax.

As has been said, he was the youngest child at school. This in itself was sufficient to set him apart from the thirty or so other blind boys; but there were other things that served to distinguish him as well. His thoughts, for instance, were so different — so unexpected and whimsical; so entirely off the beaten track.

Witness Mr. Grey, for instance. At his best Mr. Grey was a delightful person; but as he was of a retiring disposition, he never flowered into being, save in a sympathetic atmosphere. Miss Julia, for example, never met Mr. Grey.

She was one of the older teachers, whose boast it was that she never stood for any foolishness. In her not doing so, however, she was apt to walk with a heavy foot over other folks' most cherished feelings. For which reason, sensitive people were inclined in her presence to retreat within themselves, sailing, as it were, with their lights blanketed. This was the reason, no doubt, why she and Mr. Grey never met.

Indeed, Mr. Grey was of such an extremely shy nature that he had to be observed with the greatest delicacy. Looked at too closely, he was apt to go out like a blown candle. He lived apparently in an empty closet in the blind boys' clothes room. It is probable that he had taken up his abode there for the sake of being near Stanislaus, for as the latter was too small to be in school all the morning, he spent the rest of his time with Miss Lyman in the clothes room, where she sat and sewed on buttons, mended rips, and put on patches, in a desperate endeavor to keep her army of blind boys mended up. When the other children were about, as they usually were on Saturdays, Mr. Grey kept discreetly to himself, and his presence in the closet would not have been suspected. On the long school mornings, however, when Miss Lyman sat quietly sewing, with Stanislaus playing about, no one could be more unbending than Mr. Grey. Stanislaus would go over to the closet and open it a crack, and then he and Mr. Grey would fall into pleasant conversation. Miss Lyman, of course, could hear only Stanislaus's side of it, but he constantly repeated his friend's remarks for her benefit.

From hints which Stanislaus let fall, Miss Lyman gathered that there had once been a real Mr. Grey in the past, from which beginning, the interesting personality of the closet had developed.

Mr. Grey's comments upon things and people, as re-

peated by Stanislaus, showed a unique turn of mind. He seemed to have a poor opinion of mankind in general, coupled with an excellent one of himself in particular; for, retiring as he was before strangers, in the presence of friends he blossomed into an incorrigible braggart. If any one failed to do anything, Mr. Grey could always have done it, and never hesitated to say so. There was, for instance, the time when Mr. Beverly, one of the supervisors, was thrown from his horse and rather severely bruised. When informed of the incident by Stanislaus, who always gave his friend the news of the day, Mr. Grey was very scornful.

'Gwey says,' Stanislaus, over by the half-open closet door, turned to announce to Miss Lyman, ' 'at *he* never had no horse to frow *him* yet — an' he 's wid all kinds of horses. Horses wif four legs, an' horses wif five legs, —' Stanislaus had been learning to count lately, — 'an' horses wif *six* legs.'

Again, when Miss Lyman sighed over a particularly disreputable pair of Edward Stone's trousers, remarking that she really did not think she could patch those, she was met by the assertion, 'Gwey says *he* could patch 'em. He says he ain't erfwaid to patch nobody's pants. He could patch Eddy Stone's, a-a-n' he could patch Jimmie Nickle's, a-a-a-n' Sam Black's, an' — an'' —this last all in a hurry, and as a supreme evidence of proficiency in the art of patching — 'he dest b'ieves he could patch Mr. *Lincoln's* pants!'

But this was more than Miss Lyman could stand. 'No, he could n't either, for Mrs. Lincoln would n't let him,' she declared, stung to retort by such unbridled claims on the part of Mr. Grey.

It is sad to relate also that Mr. Grey was a skeptic as well as a braggart, and had had, apparently, a doubtful past. This was revealed the morning after the Sunday on which Stanislaus had first encountered the Flood, the Ark, and

Noah. After giving Mr. Grey on Monday morning a graphic account of the affair, — 'An' Noah him went into ve ark, an' token all ve animals wif him, an' ven all ve wicked people was dwown-ed,' — Stanislaus appeared to listen a moment, after which he turned to Miss Lyman.

'Gwey says,' he reported, ''at he does n't b'ieve all ve wicked people was dwown-ed, 'cause he was a-livin' ven, an' he was a very wicked man, an' he did n't go into ve Ark, an' *he* was n't dwown-ed.'

Miss Lyman might have forgiven Mr. Grey's skepticism, but he showed a tendency to incite Stanislaus to a recklessness which could not be overlooked.

None of the children were allowed to leave the school grounds without permission, but time and again Stanislaus slipped out of the gate, and was caught marching straight down the middle of the road leading to the village. This was a particularly alarming proceeding, because at this point in the road automobiles were apt to put on their last crazy burst of speed, before having to slow down to the sober ten miles an hour of the village limits. Indeed, one day, he was returned to the school by a white and irate automobilist.

'What do you suppose this little scoundrel did?' the man stormed. 'Why, he ran out from the side of the road and *barked* at my car!'

'I was dest pertendin' I was a little puppy dog,' Stanislaus murmured softly.

'Pretending you were a *puppy* dog!' roared the man. 'Well, if I had n't ditched my machine —! A *puppy dog*, indeed!'

Stanislaus was turned over to Miss Lyman for very severe chastisement. He shed bitter tears, and in the midst of them his instigator's name came out.

'G-gwey said he al'us barked at aut'mobiles — dest

barked an' barked at 'em — dest whenever he got weady,' he sobbed.

'If you ever do such a dreadful thing again, I shall give you the very worst whipping you ever had,' Miss Lyman scolded. 'Little blind boys have got to learn to be careful where they walk.'

To which Stanislaus made the astonishing reply: —

'Gwey says he dest walked anywhere he got weady when he was little — 'fore he got *his* eyes open.'

That was the first hint that Miss Lyman got of it. Afterwards she and Miss Cynthia — Stanislaus's teacher — caught constant glimpses of a curious idea that dodged in and out of the little boy's flow of talk. A queer, elusive, will-o'-the-wisp idea, caught one minute, gone the next, yet informing all the child's dreams and happy castles of the future.

At first they compared notes on the subject.

'What do you suppose Stanny has got into his head?' Miss Lyman demanded of Miss Cynthia. 'When I told him that Kent Woodward had a little sister, he said, "Has s'e got her eyes open yet?" '

'Yes,' agreed Miss Cynthia; 'and when I happened to say that Jimmie Nickle was the biggest blind boy in school, he said he must be awful stupid not to have got his eyes open yet.'

But afterwards they both by common consent avoided the subject. This was because each dreaded that the other might confirm a fear that was shaping itself in their minds.

It is probable that these two loved Stanislaus better than any one else loved him in all the world. Certainly if his father cared more for him, he did not take the trouble to show it, having seemingly washed his hands of the little fellow after turning him over to the school. It was partly

his delightful trick of individualizing people in general, and his friends in particular, that had so endeared him to these two. 'I al'us know when it's you,' he confided to Miss Lyman, as he played with her chatelaine, ''cause I hear vese tinkly fings coming way and away, 'fore you gits here.' While to Miss Cynthia he said, 'I al'us knows you by vat sweet smell.' And often he surprised them by such remarks as 'You don't like wainy days, do you, Miss Lyman? I heard you tell Miss Cyn-fee-ia vat wainy days de-de-depwessed you.' He got the big word out after a struggle. 'I fink,' he added, 'vat wainy days de-depwess me too.'

This last remark was simply an extra flourish of politeness on his part. Nothing ever really depressed him, and when he said, 'Miss Cyn-fee-ia says s'e likes to laugh; I fink I like to laugh too,' he came much nearer the truth. He did like to laugh, and he loved life and all it had to offer him. Each morning was a wonderful gift to him, and his days went by like a chain of golden beads strung together on a thread of delight.

It was because of his delight in life, and because they loved him, and could not bear that Fate should prick any of his rainbow bubbles, that both Miss Lyman and Miss Cynthia avoided the subject after they had once discovered what tragic little hope his mind was fostering.

Miss Julia, however, was different. Her sensibilities did not lead her into by-paths of pathos; therefore, when she chanced upon Stanislaus's little secret, she joyfully proclaimed it.

'Well, if that little Stanislaus is n't the funniest child I ever *did* see!' she began one evening in the teachers' hall. 'Why, if you'll believe me, he thinks that children are like kittens and puppies, and are all born blind, and after a while they get their eyes open just like cats and dogs. He thinks he is big enough now to have his eyes open 'most

any day. Well, I did n't tell him any better, but I thought I should die laughing.'

Here Miss Lyman and Miss Cynthia rose with one accord, and left the teachers' hall. Upstairs in Miss Lyman's room they faced each other.

'You knew?' Miss Cynthia half questioned, half asserted.

'How can I help knowing!' Miss Lyman cried passionately. 'He's *always* telling me what he's going to do when "I'm big an' can see." It *is n't* a foolish idea! It's a perfectly natural one. Some one has told him about puppies and kittens, and of *course* he thought children were the same way. It is n't foolish, it's —'

'You've got to tell him the truth,' Miss Cynthia interposed.

'I won't,' Miss Lyman declared. 'All his dreams and hopes are centred on that idea.'

'If you don't tell him, the other boys will find it out soon and laugh at him, and that will be worse.'

'Well, why have I got to tell him? Why don't you?'

'He loves you best,' Miss Cynthia evaded.

'I don't believe any one will have to tell him,' Miss Lyman took her up, hopefully. 'I believe it will just drop out of his mind as he gets older. He'll just cease to believe it without any shock, without ever really knowing when he found out it was n't so.'

But she reckoned without Mr. Grey. He, it appeared, had fixed a date for the great event.

'Gwey says,' Stanislaus announced, 'vat he got *his* eyes open ve day he was five, an' he dest bets I'll get mine open ven too.'

Thereafter, all his dreams and plays were inspired by the magic words, 'When I'm five an' can see.' The sentence served as a mental spring-board to jump his imagination

off into a world of wonder where he could see, 'dest — dest as good as big folks,' or 'dest as good as Gwey.'

Every day his fifth birthday drew nearer, and Miss Cynthia's eyes said, You've got to tell; and everyday Miss Lyman avoided them.

At last it was the day before his birthday. He waked with the words, 'To-mowwow is my birfday,' on his tongue, and scrambled out of bed, a little night-shirted figure of ecstasy. His dressing that morning — the putting on of his shoes, the scrubbing of his fingers, the rather uncertain brushing of his hair — all went off to the happy refrain of —

'To-mowwow is my birfday, my birfday, my birfday!'

Some deep wisdom kept him from letting the other boys suspect what Mr. Grey had foretold for his birthday; but when he came to Miss Lyman that she might look him over before he went to school, he pulled her down close to whisper, 'I'm goin' to look at *you* de very first one of all.' And to seal the matter he deposited a kiss in the palm of her hand, and shut her fingers upon it.

'Keep vat till I come back,' he commanded, and went jauntily off to school, where in all probability he made the same engaging promise to Miss Cynthia, and sealed it with the same token. But if he did, one may be certain he hid the token safe away in her hand. He was always shy about kisses, not being quite sure but that they might be visible. You could certainly feel the things, so why might n't they be seen as well, sticking right out on one's cheek, for seeing people to stare at? For this reason, he refused them on his own account, ''cause vey might show'; and those that he gave were always bestowed in the palm of the hand, where the fingers could be closed hastily upon them.

Miss Lyman sat in the clothes room that morning, and sewed and waited. Her needle blurred, and her thread knotted, and the patches seemed more difficult than ever,

and all because she had told herself that presently she must take a little boy up in her lap and shatter his dearest hope with truth. She had made up her mind that, when he came from school that morning, she would have to tell him. Therefore she sat and sewed, her whole being tense for the sound of his footsteps. She knew just how he would come — with a sudden scamper up the steps outside. He always ran as soon as his fingers were sure of the rail, because much of his time he was an engine, 'An' vats ve way twains come up steps.' Then he would whisk around the corner, fumble an instant for the door-handle, and burst in upon her.

But after all, none of these sounds came. Instead, there was suddenly the trampling of grown-up feet, the rush of skirts, and Miss Cynthia threw the door open.

'Oh, come — come quick!' she panted. 'Stanny is hurt — He ran away — Oh, I *told* him to come straight to you! But he ran away down the road, and a motor — '

Together they sped down the long corridors to the hospital. They had brought Stanny there and laid him on one of the very clean little beds. Such a tiny crushed morsel of humanity in the centre of the big bare room! But his hand moved and he found Miss Lyman's chatelaine as she bent over him.

'I knowed you was comin' by ve tinkly fings,' he whispered. Then — 'I was dest playin' it was my birfday an' I could see. — Gwey said to. — Is you — is you goin' to punish me vis time?' he quavered.

'No, lovey, no — not this time,' she faltered, for she had caught the look on the doctor's face.

'Gwey said he al'us dest barked an' barked at aut'-mobiles. — Let me hold ve tinkly fings so's I will know you is vere.' And by and by he murmured, 'It'll be my birfday soon — *weal* soon now, won't it?'

'Very, very soon now,' she answered, and clinched her hand tight to keep her voice steady.

'Why,' he said, his restless fingers chancing upon her clinched ones, 'why, you is still got my kiss all tight in you hand. I'd fink it would be all melted by now.' A little startled moan cut him short. 'I hurts!' he cried. 'Oh, I *hurts!*'

'Yes,' she answered breathlessly, 'yes, my darling, it will hurt a little.'

'Is it — is it 'cause my eyes is openin'?' he gasped.

'Yes, lovey, that's the reason.' Her hand held his tight. 'But it won't hurt long.'

'Gwey never — never said it would hurt like vis,' he sobbed.

The doctor stooped down and made a tiny prick in the baby arm, and after a little Stanislaus lay still.

'He may be conscious again before the end,' the doctor said, 'but I hardly think it is likely.'

He was not. He tossed a little, and murmured broken snatches of words, but he was too busy going along this new exciting path to turn back to the old ways, even to speak to his friends.

Miss Lyman sat beside him all through the bright afternoon, through the tender dusk, and through the dark. Late in the night, he stirred, and cried out with a little happy breath, —

'My *birfday!* It's *come!*'

And by the time it was morning he had gone.

Miss Lyman closed the eyes that had opened so wide upon another world, drew up all the curtains, that the room might be flooded with the dancing light of his birthday morning, said a little prayer, committing him to his angel, and stole softly away.

A SOLDIER OF THE LEGION

BY E. MORLAE

It was almost daylight, and things were visible at two to three metres. The bombardment had died down, and the quiet was hardly disturbed by occasional shots. Our captain marched ahead of the second section, swinging a cane and contentedly puffing on his pipe. Nearly everybody was smoking. As we marched along we noticed that new trenches had been dug during the night from sixty to a hundred metres in rear of the position we had held, and were filled by the Twenty-ninth Chasseur Regiment, which replaced us.

Very cunningly these trenches were arranged. They were deep and narrow, fully seven feet deep and barely a yard wide. At every favorable point, on every little rise in the ground, a salient had been constructed, projecting out from the main trench ten to fifteen metres, protected by heavy logs, corrugated steel sheets, and two to three feet of dirt. Each side of the salients bristled with machine-guns. Any attack upon this position would be bound to fail, owing to the intense volume of fire that could be brought to bear upon the flanks of the enemy.

To make assurance doubly sure, the Engineer Corps had dug rows of cup-shaped bowls, two feet in diameter, two feet deep, leaving but a narrow wedge of dirt between each two; and in the centre of each bowl was placed a six-pointed twisted steel 'porcupine.' This instrument, however it is placed, always presents a sharp point right at you. Five rows of these man-traps I counted, separated by a thin wall of dirt not strong enough to maintain the weight of a

man, so that any one who attempted to rush past would be thrown against the 'porcupine' and be spitted like a pigeon. As an additional precaution a mass of barbed wire lay in rolls, ready to be placed in front of this *ouvrage*, to make it safe against any surprise.

We marched along, talking and chatting, discussing this and that, without a care in the world. Every one hoped we were going to the rear to recuperate and enjoy a good square meal and a good night's rest. Seeger[1] wanted a good wash, he said. He was rather dirty, and so was I. My puttees dangled in pieces round my calves. It seems I had torn them going through the German wire the day before. I told Haeffle to keep his eyes open for a good pair on some dead man. He said he would.

The company marched round the hill we descended so swiftly yesterday and, describing a semi-circle, entered again the *Schützengraben Spandau* and marched back in the direction we had come from. The trench, however, presented a different appearance. The bad places had been repaired, the loose dirt had been shoveled out, and the dead had disappeared. On the east side of the trench an extremely high parapet had been built. This parapet was complete even to loop-holes — rather funny-looking loop-holes, I thought; and when I looked closer, I saw that they were framed in by boots! I reached my hand into several of them as we walked along, and touched the limbs of dead men. The engineers, it seems, in need of material, had placed the dead Germans on top of the ground, feet flush with the inside of the ditch, leaving from six to seven inches between two bodies, and laying another body cross-wise on top of the two, spanning the gap between them. Then they had shoveled the dirt on top of them, thus killing two birds with one stone.

[1] Alan Seeger, the poet, who was later killed in battle.

The discovery created a riot of excitement among the men. Curses intermingled with laughter came from ahead of us. Everybody was tickled by the ingenuity of our *génie*. 'They are marvelous!' we thought. Dowd's face showed consternation, yet he could not help smiling. Little King was pale around the mouth, yet his lips were twisted in a grin. It was horribly amusing.

Every 200 metres we passed groups of the One Hundred and Seventieth, on duty in the trench. The front line, they told us, was twelve hundred metres farther east, and this trench formed the second line for their regiment. We entered the third-line trench of the Germans, from which they ran yesterday to surrender, and continued marching in the same direction — always east. Here we had a chance to investigate the erstwhile German habitations.

Exactly forty paces apart, doorways opened into the dirt bank, and from each of them fourteen steps descended at about forty-five degrees into a cellar-like room. The stairs were built of wood and the sides of the stairways and the chambers below were lined with one-inch pine boards. These domiciles must have been quite comfortable and safe, but now they were choked with bodies. As we continued our leisurely way, we met some of our trench-cleaners, and they recited their experiences with gusto. The Germans, they told us, pointing down into the charnel-houses, refused to come and give up, and even fired at them when summoned to surrender. 'Then what did you do?' I asked. 'Very simple,' answered one. 'We stood on the top of the ground right above the door and hurled grenade after grenade through the doorway until all noise gradually ceased down below. Then we went to the next hole and did the same thing. It was n't at all dangerous,' he added, 'and it was very effective.'

We moved but slowly along the trench, and every once

in a while there was a halt while some of the men investigated promising 'prospects,' where the holes packed with dead Germans held out some promise of loot. Owing to the order of march, the first company was the last one in line, and my section at the very end. The head of the column was the fourth company, then the third, then the second, and then we. By the time my section came to any hole holding out hopes of souvenirs, there was nothing left for us. Yet I did find a German officer with a new pair of puttees, and, hastily unwinding them, I discarded my own and put on the new ones. As I bound them on I noticed the name on the tag — 'Hindenburg.' I suppose that name stands for quality with the Boches.

We left the trench and swung into another communication trench, going to the left, still in an easterly direction, straight on toward the Butte de Souain. That point, we knew, was still in the hands of the Germans, and very quickly they welcomed us. Shells came shrieking down — 105*mm.*, 150, 210, and 250. It's very easy to tell when you are close to them, even if you can't see a thing. When a big shell passes high, it sounds like a white-hot piece of iron suddenly doused in cold water; but when it gets close, the *sw-i-ish* suddenly rises in a high crescendo, a shriek punctuated by a horrible roar. The uniformity of movement as the men ducked was beautiful — and they all did it! One moment there was a line of gray helmets bobbing up and down the trenches as the line plodded on; and the next instant one could see only a line of black canvas close to the ground, as every man ducked and shifted his shoulder-sack over his neck. My sack had been blown to pieces when I was buried, and I felt uncomfortably handicapped, with only my *musette* for protection against steel splinters.

About a mile from where we entered this *boyau* we came to a temporary halt, then went on once more. The fourth

company had come to a halt, and we squeezed past them as we marched along. Every man of them had his shovel out and had commenced digging a niche for himself. We passed the fourth company, then the third, then the second, and finally the first, second, and third sections of our own company. Just beyond, we ourselves came to a halt and, lining up one man to the metre, started to organize the trench for defensive purposes. From the other side of a slight ridge, east of us and about six hundred metres away, came the sound of machine-guns. Between us and the ridge the Germans were executing a very lively *feu de barrage*, a screen of fire prohibiting any idea of sending reinforcements over to the front line.

Attached for rations to my section were the major of the battalion, a captain, and three sergeants of the état-major. Two of the sergeants were at the trench telephone, and I could hear them report the news to the officers. 'The Germans,' they reported, 'are penned in on three sides and are prevented from retreating by our artillery.' Twice they had attempted to pierce our line between them and the Butte de Souain, and twice they were driven back. Good news for us!

At 10 A.M. we sent three men from each section to the rear for the soup. At about eleven they reappeared with steaming *marmites* of soup, stew, coffee, and buckets of wine. The food was very good, and disappeared to the last morsel.

After eating, the captains granted me permission to walk along the ditch back to the fourth company. The trench being too crowded for comfort, I walked alongside to the second company, and searched for my friend, Sergeant Velte. Finally I found him lying in a shell-hole, side by side with his adjutant and Sergeant Morin. All three were dead, torn to pieces by one shell shortly after we had passed them

in the morning. At the third company they reported that Second Lieutenant Sweeny had been shot through the chest by a lost ball that morning. Hard luck for Sweeny! The poor devil had just been nominated *sous-lieutenant* at the request of the French Embassy in Washington; and when he was attached as supernumerary to the third company we all had hopes that he would have a chance to prove his merit.

In the fourth company also the losses were severe. The part of the trench occupied by the three companies was directly enfiladed by the German batteries on the Butte de Souain, and every little while a shell would fall square into the ditch and take toll from the occupants. Our company was fully a thousand metres nearer to these batteries, but the trenches we occupied presented a three-quarter face to the fire, and consequently were ever so much harder to hit. Even then, when I got back I found four men *hors de combat* in the fourth section. In my section two niches were demolished without any one being hit.

Time dragged slowly until four in the afternoon, when we had soup again. Many of the men built little fires, and with the *Erbsenwurst* they had found on dead Germans prepared a very palatable soup by way of extra rations.

At four o'clock sentries were posted and everybody fell asleep. A steady rain was falling, and to keep dry we hooked one edge of our tent-sheet on the ground above the niche and put dirt on top of it to hold. Then we pushed cartridges through the buttonholes of the tent, pinning them into the side of the trench, and forming a good cover for the occupant of the hole. Thus we rested until the new day broke, bringing a clear sky and sunshine. This day, the 27th, — the third of the battle, — passed without mishap to my section. We spent our time eating and sleeping, mildly distracted by an intermittent bombardment.

Another night spent in the same cramped quarters! We were getting weary of inactivity, and it was rather hard work to keep the men in the ditch. They sneaked off singly and in pairs, always heading back to the German dug-outs, all bent on turning things upside down in the hope of finding something of value to carry as a keepsake.

Haeffle came back once with three automatic pistols, but no cartridges; from another trip he returned with an officer's helmet; and the third time he brought triumphantly back a string three feet long of dried sausages. Haeffle always did have a healthy appetite, and it transpired that on the way back he had eaten a dozen sausages, more or less. The dried meat had made him thirsty and he had drunk half a canteen of water on top of it. The result was, he swelled up like a poisoned pup, and for a time he was surely a sick man.

Zinn found two shiny German bayonets, a long thin one, and one short and heavy, and swore he would pack them for a year if he had to. Zinn hailed from Battle Creek and wanted to use them as brush-knives on camping trips in the Michigan woods; but alas, in the sequel they got too heavy and were dropped along the road. One man found a German pipe with a three-foot soft-rubber stem, which he intended sending to his brother as a souvenir. Man and pipe are buried on the slopes of the Butte de Souain. He died that same evening.

At the usual time — 4 P.M. — we had soup, and just after that, came the order to get ready. Looking over the trench, we watched the fourth company form in the open back of the ditch and, marching past us in an oblique direction, disappear round a spur of wooded hill. The third company followed at four hundred metres distance, then the second; and as they passed out of sight around the hill, we jumped out, and, forming in line sections at thirty-

metre intervals, each company four hundred metres in the rear of the one ahead, we followed, *arme à la bretelle.*

We were quite unobserved by the enemy, and marched the length of the hill for three fourths of a kilometre, keeping just below the crest. Above us sailed four big French battle-planes and some small aero scouts, on the lookout for enemy aircraft. For a while it seemed as if we should not be discovered, and the command was given to lie down. From where we lay we could observe clearly the ensuing scrap in the air, and it was worth watching. Several German planes had approached close to our lines, but were discovered by the swift-flying scouts. Immediately the little fellows returned with the news to the big planes, and we watched the monster biplanes mount to the combat. In a wide circle they swung, climbing, climbing higher and higher, and then headed in a bee-line straight toward the German *Tauben.* As they approached within range of each other, we saw little clouds appear close to the German planes, some in front, some over them, and others behind; and then, after an interval, the report of the 32*mm.* guns mounted on our battle-planes floated down to us, immediately followed like an echo by the crack of the bursting shell. Long before the Germans could get within effective range for their machine-guns, they were peppered by our planes and ignominiously forced to beat a retreat. One Albatross seemed to be hit. He staggered from one side to the other, then dipped forward, and, standing straight on his nose, dropped like a stone out of sight behind the forest crowning the hill.

Again we moved on, and shortly arrived at the southern spur of the hill. Here the company made a quarter turn to the left, and in the same formation began the ascent of the hill. The second company was just disappearing into the scrubby pine forest on top. We entered also, continued on

to the top, and halted just below the crest. The captain called the officers and sergeants, and, following him, we crawled on our stomachs up to the highest point and looked over.

Never shall I forget the panorama that spread before us! The four thin ranks of the second company seemed to stagger drunkenly through a sea of green fire and smoke. One moment gaps showed in the lines, only to be closed again as the rear files spurted. Undoubtedly they ran at top speed, but to us watchers they seemed to crawl, and at times almost to stop. Mixed in with the dark green of the grass covering the valley were rows of lighter color, telling of the men who fell in that mad sprint. The continuous bombardment sounded like a giant drum beating an incredibly swift *rataplan*. Along the whole length of our hill this curtain of shells was dropping, leveling the forest and seemingly beating off the very face of the hill itself, clean down to the bottom of the valley. Owing to the proximity of our troops to the enemy's batteries, we received hardly any support from our own big guns, and the rôle of the combatants was entirely reversed. The Germans had their innings then, and full well they worked.

As the company descended into the valley the pace became slower, and at the beginning of the opposite slope they halted and faced back. Owing to the height of the Butte de Souain, they were safe, and they considered that it was their turn to act as spectators.

As our captain rose, we followed and took our places in front of our sections. Again I impressed upon the minds of my men the importance of following in a straight line and as close behind one another as possible. '*Arme à la main!*' came the order, and slowly we moved to the crest and then immediately broke into a dog-trot. Instantly we were enveloped in flames and smoke. Hell kissed us welcome!

Closely I watched the captain for the sign to increase our speed. I could have run a mile in record time, but he plugged steadily along, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, — at a tempo of a hundred and eighty steps per minute, three to the second, — the regulation tempo. Inwardly I cursed his insistence upon having things *réglementaires.*

As I looked at the middle of his back, longing for him to hurry, I caught sight, on my right, of a shell exploding directly in the centre of the third section. Out of the tail of my eye I saw the upper part of Corporal Keraudy's body rise slowly into the air. The legs had disappeared, and with arms outstretched the trunk sank down on the corpse of Varma, the Hindu, who had marched behind him. Instinctively, I almost stopped in my tracks: Keraudy was a friend of mine; but at the instant Corporal Mettayer, running behind me, bumped into my back, and shoved me again into life and action.

We were out of the woods then, and running down the bare slope of the hill. A puff of smoke, red-hot, smote me in the face, and at the same moment intense pain shot up my jaw. I did not think I was hit seriously, since I was able to run all right. Some one in the second section intoned the regimental march, '*Allons, giron.*' Others took it up; and there, in that scene of death and hell, this song portraying the lusts and vices of the *Légion Étrangère* became a very pæan of enthusiasm and courage.

Glancing to the right, I saw that we were getting too close to the second section, so I gave the signal for a left oblique. We bore away from them until once again at our thirty paces distance. All at once my feet tangled up in something and I almost fell. It was long grass! Just then it seemed to grow upon my mind that we were down in the valley and out of range of the enemy. Then I glanced ahead, and not

over a hundred metres away I saw the second company lying in the grass and watching us coming. As we neared, they shouted little pleasantries at us and congratulated us upon our speed.

'Why this unseemly haste?' one wants to know.

'You go to the devil!' answers Haeffle.

'*Merci, mon ami!*' retorts the first; 'I have just come through his back kitchen.'

Counting my section, I missed Dubois, St. Hilaire, and Schueli. Collette, Joe told me, was left on the hill.

The company had lost two sergeants, one corporal, and thirteen men coming down that short stretch! We mustered but forty-five men, all told. One, Sergeant Terisien, had commanded my section, the 'American Section,' for four months, but was transferred to the fourth. From where we rested we could see him slowly descending the hill, bareheaded and with his right hand clasping his left shoulder. He had been severely wounded in the head, and his left arm was nearly torn off at the shoulder. Poor devil! He was a good comrade and a good soldier. Just before the war broke out he had finished his third enlistment in the Legion, and was in line for a discharge and pension when he died.

Looking up the awful slope we had just descended, we could see the bodies of our comrades, torn and mangled and again and again kicked up into the air by the shells. For two days and nights the hellish hail continued to beat upon that blood-soaked slope, until we finally captured the Butte de Souain and forced an entire regiment of Saxons to the left of the butte to capitulate.

Again we assembled in column of fours, and this time began the climb up hill. Just then I happened to think of the blow I had received under the jaw, and, feeling of the spot, discovered a slight wound under my left jaw-bone.

Handing my rifle to a man, I pressed slightly upon the sore spot and pulled a steel splinter out of the wound. A very thin, long sliver of steel it was, half the diameter of a dime and not more than a dime's thickness, but an inch and a half long. The metal was still hot to the touch. The scratch continued bleeding freely, but I did not bandage it at the time because I felt sure of needing my emergency dressing farther along.

Up near the crest of the hill we halted in an angle of the woods and lay down alongside the One Hundred and Seventy-Second Regiment of infantry. They had made the attack in this direction on the 25th, but had been severely checked at this point. Infantry and machine-gun fire sounded very close, and lost bullets by the hundreds flicked through the branches overhead. The One Hundred and Seventy-Second informed us that a battalion of the *Premier Étranger* had entered the forest and was at that moment storming a position to our immediate left. Through the trees showed lights, brighter than day, cast from hundreds of German magnesium candles shot into the air.

Our officers were grouped with those of the other regiment, and after a very long conference they separated, each to his command. Our captain called the officers and subalterns of the company together, and in terse sentences explained to us our positions and the object of the coming assault. It was to be a purely local affair, and the point was the clearing of the enemy from the hill we were on. On a map drawn to scale he pointed out the lay of the land.

It looked to me a hard proposition. Imagine a toothbrush about a mile long and three eighths to one half a mile wide. The back is formed by the summit of the hill, which is densely wooded, and the hairs of the brush are represented by four little ridges rising from the valley we had just crossed, each one crowned with strips of forest and

uniting with the main ridge at right angles. Between each two lines of hair are open spaces, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty metres wide. We, of the second regiment, were to deliver the assault parallel with the hairs and stretching from the crest down to the valley.

The other column was to make a demonstration from our left, running a general course at right angles to ours. The time set was eight o'clock at night.

Returning to our places, we informed the men of what they were in for. While we were talking, we noticed a group of men come from the edge of the woods and form into company formation, and we could hear them answer to the roll-call. I went over and peered at them. On their coat-collars I saw the gilt No. 1. It was the *Premier Étranger*.

As the roll-call proceeded, I wondered. The sergeant was deciphering with difficulty the names from his little *carnet*, and response after response was, 'Mort.' Once in a while the answer changed to 'Mort sur le champ d'honneur,' or a brief 'Tombé.' There were twenty-two men in line, not counting the sergeant and a corporal, who in rear of the line supported himself precariously on two rifles which served him as crutches. Two more groups appeared back of this one, and the same proceeding was repeated. As I stood near the second group I could just catch the responses of the survivors. 'Duvivier': 'Present.' — 'Selonti': 'Presnet.' — 'Boismort': 'Tombé.' — 'Herkis': 'Mort.' — 'Carney': 'Mort.' — 'MacDonald': 'Present.' — 'Farnsworth': 'Mort sur le champ d'honneur,' responded MacDonald. Several of the men I had known, Farnsworth among them. One officer, a second lieutenant, commanded the remains of the battalion. Seven hundred and fifty men, he informed me, had gone in an hour ago, and less than two hundred came back.

'Ah, mon ami,' he told me, 'c'est bien chaud dans le bois.'

Quietly they turned into column of fours and disappeared in the darkness. Their attack had failed. Owing to the protection afforded by the trees, our aerial scouts had failed to gather definite information of the defenses constructed in the forest, and owing also to the same cause, our previous bombardment had been ineffective.

It was our job to remedy this. One battalion of the One Hundred and Seventy-Second was detached and placed in line with us, and at eight P.M. sharp the major's whistle sounded, echoed by that of our captain.

Quietly we lined up at the edge of the forest, shoulder to shoulder, bayonets fixed. Quietly each corporal examined the rifles of his men, inspected the magazines, and saw that each chamber also held a cartridge with firing-pin down. As silently as possible we entered between the trees, and carefully kept in touch with each other. It was dark in there, and we had moved along some little distance before our eyes were used to the blackness. As I picked my steps I prepared myself for the shock every man experiences at the first sound of a volley. Twice I fell down into shell-holes and cursed my clumsiness and that of some other fellows to my right. 'The "Dutch" must be asleep,' I thought, 'or else they beat it.' Hopefully the latter!

We were approaching the farther edge of the tooth-brush 'bristle,' and breathlessly we halted at the edge of the little open space before us. About eighty metres across loomed the black line of another 'row of hairs.'

The captain and second section to our right moved on and we kept in line, still slowly and cautiously, carefully putting one foot before the other. Suddenly from the darkness in front of us came four or five heavy reports like the noise of a shot-gun, followed by a long hiss. Into the

air streamed trails of sparks. Above our heads the hiss ended with a sharp crack, and everything stood revealed as if it were broad daylight.

At the first crash, the major, the captains — everybody, it seemed to me — yelled at the same time, 'En avant! Pas de charge!' — and in full run, with fixed bayonets, we flew across the meadow. As we neared the woods, we were met by solid sheets of steel balls. Roar upon roar came from the forest; the volleys came too fast, it shot into my mind, to be well aimed. Then something hit me on the chest and I fell sprawling. Barbed wire! Everybody seemed to be on the ground at once, crawling, pushing, struggling through. My rifle was lost and I grasped my *parabellum*. It was a German weapon, German charges, German cartridges. This time the Germans were to get a taste of their own medicine, I thought. Lying on my back, I wormed through the wire, butting into the men in front of me and getting kicked in the head by Mettayer. As I crawled I could hear the *ping-ping* of balls striking the wire, and the shrill moan as they glanced off and continued on their flight.

Putting out my hand, I felt loose dirt, and, lying flat, peered over the parapet. 'Nobody home,' I thought; and then I saw one of the Collette brothers in the trench come running toward me, and ahead of him a burly Boche. I could see Joe make a one-handed lunge with the rifle, and the bayonet showed fully a foot in front of the German's chest.

Re-forming, we advanced toward the farther fringe of the little forest. Half-way through the trees, we lay down flat on our stomachs, rifle in right hand, and slowly, very slowly, wormed our way past the trees into the opening between us and our goal. Every man had left his knapsack in front, or else hanging on the barbed wire, and we were in good shape for the work that lay ahead. But the sections

and companies were inextricably mixed. On one side of me crawled a lieutenant of the One Hundred and Seventy-Second and on the other a private I had never seen before. Still we were all in line, and when some one shouted, 'Feu de quatre cartouches!' we fired four rounds, and after the command all crawled again a few paces nearer.

Several times we halted to fire, aiming at the sheets of flame spurting toward us. Over the Germans floated several parachute magnesium rockets, sent up by our own men, giving a vivid light and enabling us to shoot with fair accuracy. I think now that the German fire was too high. Anyway, I did not notice any one in my immediate vicinity getting hit. Though our progress was slow, we finally arrived at the main wire entanglement.

All corporals in the French Army carry wire-nippers, and it was our corporals' business to open a way through the entanglement. Several men to my right I could see one — he looked like Mettayer — lying flat on his back and, nippers in hand, snipping away at the wire overhead, while all of us behind kept up a murderous and constant fire at the enemy. Mingled with the roar of the rifles came the stuttering rattle of the machine-guns, at moments drowned by the crash of hand-grenades. Our grenadiers had rather poor success with their missiles, however, most of them hitting trees in front of the trench. The lieutenant on my left had four grenades. I could see him plainly. With one in his hand, he crawled close to the wire, rolled on his back, rested an instant with arms extended, both hands grasping the grenade, then suddenly he doubled forward and back and sent the bomb flying over his head. For two, three seconds — it seemed longer at the time — we listened, and then came the roar of the explosion. He smiled and nodded to me, and again went through the same manœuvre.

In the meantime I kept my *parabellum* going. I had nine magazines loaded with dum-dum balls I had taken from some dead Germans, and I distributed the balls impartially between three *créneaux* in front of me. On my right, men were surging through several breaks in the wire. Swiftly I rolled over and over toward the free lane and went through with a rush. The combat had become a hand-grenade affair. Our grenadiers crawled alongside the parapet and at regular intervals tossed one of their missiles into it, while the others, shooting over their heads, potted the Germans as they ran to the rear.

Suddenly the fusillade ceased, and with a crash, it seemed, silence and darkness descended upon us. The sudden cessation of the terrific rifle-firing and of the constant rattling of the machine-guns struck one like a blow. Sergeant Altoffer brought me some information about one of my men, and almost angrily I asked him not to shout! 'I'm not deaf yet,' I assured him. 'Mon vieux,' he raged, 'it's you who are shouting!'

I realized my fault and apologized, and in return accepted a drink of wine from his canteen.

Finding the captain, we were ordered to assemble the men and maintain the trench, and after much searching I found a few men of the section. The little scrap had cost us three more men. Subiron, Dowd, and Zinn were wounded and sent to the rear. The One Hundred and Seventy-Second sent a patrol toward the farthest, the last hair of the tooth-brush, with orders to reconnoitre thoroughly. An hour passed and they had not returned. Twenty minutes more went by, still no patrol. Rather curious, we thought. No rifle-shots had come from that direction, nor any noise such as would be heard during a combat with the bayonet. The major's patience gave way, and our captain received orders to send another patrol. He picked me and I chose

King, Delpeuch, and Birchler. All three had automatics — King a parabellum, Delpeuch and Birchler, Brownings. They left rifles, bayonets, and cartridge-boxes behind, and in Indian file followed me at a full run in an oblique direction past the front of the company, and, when half way across the clearing, following my example, fell flat on the ground. We rested a while to regain our wind and then began to slide on our stomachs at right angles to our first course.

We were extremely careful to remain silent. Every little branch and twig we moved carefully out of our way; with one hand extended we felt of the ground before us as we hitched ourselves along. So silent was our progress that several times I felt in doubt about any one being behind me and rested motionless until I felt the touch of Delpeuch's hand upon my foot. After what seemed twenty minutes, we again changed direction, this time straight toward the trees looming close to us. We arrived abreast of the first row of trees, and lying still as death listened for sounds of the enemy. All was absolutely quiet; only the branches rustled overhead in a light breeze.

A long time we lay there, but heard no sound. We began to feel somewhat creepy, and I was tempted to pull my pistol and let nine shots rip into the damnable stillness before us. However, I refrained, and touching my neighbor, started crawling along the edge of the wood. Extreme care was necessary, owing to the numberless branches littering the ground. The sweat was rolling down my face.

Again we listened and again we were baffled by that silence. I was angry then and started to crawl between the trees. A tiny sound of metal scratching upon metal and I almost sank into the ground! Quickly I felt reassured. It was my helmet touching a strand of barbed wire. Still no sound!

Boldly we rose and, standing behind trees, scanned the darkness. Over to our right we saw a glimmer of light and, walking this time, putting one foot carefully before the other, moved toward it. When opposite we halted and — I swore. From the supposed trench of the enemy came the hoarse voice of an apparently drunken man, singing the *chanson* 'La Riviera.' Another voice offered a toast to 'La Légion.'

Carelessly we made our way through the barbed wire, crawling under and stepping over the strands, jumped over a ditch, and looked down into what seemed to be an underground palace. There they were, — the six men of the One Hundred and Seventy-Second, — three of them lying stiff and stark on benches, utterly drunk. Two were standing up disputing, and the singer sat in an armchair, holding a long-stemmed glass in his hand. Close by him were several unopened bottles of champagne on the table. Many empty bottles littered the floor.

The singer welcomed us with a shout and an open hand, to which we, however, did not immediately respond. The heartbreaking work while approaching this place rankled in our minds. The sergeant and corporal were too drunk to be of any help, while two of the men were crying, locked in each others' arms. Another was asleep, and our friend the singer absolutely refused to budge. So, after I had stowed two bottles inside my shirt (an example punctiliously followed by the others), we returned.

Leaving Birchler at the wire, I placed King in the middle of the clearing, Delpeuch near the edge of the wood held by us, and then reported. The captain passed the word along to the major, and on the instant we were ordered to fall in, and in column of two marched over to the abandoned trench, following the line marked by my men.

As we entered and disposed ourselves therein, I noticed

all the officers, one after the other, disappear in the palace. Another patrol was sent out by our company, and, after ranging the country in our front, returned safely. That night it happened to be the second company's turn to mount outposts, and we could see six groups of men, one corporal and five men in each, march out into the night and somewhere, each in some favorable spot, they placed themselves at a distance of about one hundred metres away to watch, while we slept the sleep of the just.

Day came, and with it the *corvée* carrying hot coffee and bread. After breakfast another corvée was sent after picks and shovels, and the men were set to work remodeling the trench, shifting the parapet to the other side, building little outpost trenches and setting barbed wire. The latter job was done in a wonderfully short time, thanks to German thoroughness, since for the stakes to which the wire is tied the Boches had substituted soft iron rods, three quarters of an inch thick, twisted five times in the shape of a great corkscrew. This screw twisted into the ground exactly like a cork-puller into a cork. The straight part of the rod, being twisted upon itself down and up again every ten inches, formed six or seven small round loops in a height of about five feet. Into these eyes the barbed wire was laid and solidly secured with short lengths of tying wire. First cutting the tying wire, we lifted the barbed wire out of the eyes, shoved a small stick through one, and, turning the rod with the leverage of the stick, unscrewed it out of the ground and then, reversing the process, screwed it in again. The advantage of this rod is obvious. When a shell falls in the midst of this wire protection, the rods are bent and twisted, but unless broken off short they always support the wire, and even after a severe bombardment present a serious obstacle to the assaulters. In such cases wooden

posts are blown to smithereens by the shells, and when broken off let the wire fall flat to the ground.

As I was walking up and down, watching the work, I noticed a large box, resting bottom up in a deep hole opening from the trench. Dragging the box out and turning it over, I experienced a sudden flutter of the heart. There, before my astonished eyes, resting upon a little platform of boards, stood a neat little centrifugal pump painted green, and on the base of it in raised iron letters I read the words, 'Byron Jackson, San Francisco.' I felt queer at the stomach for an instant. San Francisco! my home town! Before my eyes passed pictures of Market Street and the 'Park.' In fancy I was again one of the Sunday crowd at the Cliff House. How came this pump so far from home? Many times I had passed the very place where it was made. How, I wonder, did the Boche get this pump? Before the war, or through Holland? A California-built pump to clean water out of German trenches, in France! It was astonishing! With something like reverence I put the pump back again, and, going to my place in the trench, dug out one of my bottles of champagne and stood treat to the crowd. Somehow, I felt almost happy.

As I continued my rounds I came upon a man sitting on the edge of the ditch, surrounded by naked branches, busy cutting them into two-foot lengths and tying them together in the shape of a cross. I asked him how many he was making, and he told me that he expected to work all day to supply the crosses needed along one battalion front. French and German were treated alike, he assured me. There was absolutely no difference in the size of the crosses.

As we worked, soup arrived, and when that was disposed of, the men rested for some hours. We were absolutely unmolested except by our officers.

But at one o'clock that night we were again assembled in

marching kit, each man with an extra pick or shovel, and marched along parallel with our trench to the summit of the butte. There we installed ourselves in the main line, out of which the Germans were driven by the One Hundred and Seventy-Second. There was no work of any kind to be done, and quickly we found some dry wood, built small fires, and with the material found in dug-outs brewed some really delightful beverages. Mine was a mixture of wine and water out of Haeffle's canteen, judiciously blended with chocolate.

The weather was delightful, and we spent the afternoon lying in sunny spots, shifting once in a while out of the encroaching shade into the warm rays. We had no idea where the Germans were — somewhere in front, of course, but just how far or how near mattered little to us. Anyhow, the One Hundred and Seventy-Second was fully forty metres nearer to them than we were, and we could see and hear the first-line troops picking and shoveling their way into the ground.

Little King was, as usual, making the round of the company, trying to find some one to build a fire and get water if he, King, would furnish the chocolate. He found no takers and soon he laid himself down, muttering about the laziness of the outfit.

Just as we were dozing deliciously, an agonized yell brought every soldier to his feet. Rushing toward the cry, I found a man sitting on the ground, holding his leg below the knee with both hands, and moaning as he rocked back and forth, 'Je suis blessé! Je suis blessé!' Brushing his hands aside, I examined his leg. There was no blood. I took off the puttee, rolled up his trousers, and discovered no sign of a wound. On my asking the man again where the wound was, he passed his hand over a small red spot on his shin. Just then another man picked up a small piece of

shell, and then the explanation dawned upon me. The Germans were shooting at our planes straight above us; a bit of shell had come down and hit our sleeper on the shinbone. Amid a gale of laughter he limped away to a more sympathetic audience.

Several more pieces of iron fell near us. Some fragments were no joking matter, being the entire rear ends of three-inch shells, weighing, I should think, fully seven pounds.

At 4 P.M. the soup corvée arrived. Besides the usual soup we had roast mutton, one small slice per man, and a mixture of white beans, rice, and string beans. There was coffee, and one cup of wine per man, and, best of all, tobacco. As we munched our food, our attention was attracted to the sky above by an intense cannonade directed against several of our aeroplanes sailing east. As we looked, more and more of our war-birds appeared. Whipping out my glasses, I counted fifty-two machines. Another man counted sixty. Haeffle had it a hundred. The official report next day stated fifty-nine. They were flying very high and in very open formation, winging due east. The shells were breaking ahead of them and between them. The heaven was studded with hundreds upon hundreds of beautiful little round grayish clouds, each one the nimbus of a bursting shell. With my prismatics glued to my eyes, I watched closely for one falling bird. Though it seemed incredible at the moment, not one faltered or turned back. Due east they steered, into the red painted sky. For several minutes after they had sailed out of my sight I could still hear the roar of the guns. Only one machine, the official report said, was shot down, and that one fell on the return trip.

Just before night fell, we all set to work cutting pine branches, and with the tips prepared soft beds for ourselves. Sentries were placed, one man per section, and we laid ourselves down to sleep. The night passed quietly;

again the day started with the usual hot coffee and bread. Soup and stew at 10 A.M., and the same again at 4 P.M. One more quiet night, and quiet the following day. We were becoming somewhat restless with the monotony, but were cheered by the captain. That night, he told us, we should return to Suippes, and there reform the regiment and rest. The programme sounded good, but I felt very doubtful, we had heard the same tale so many times and so many times we had been disappointed. Each day the corvées had brought the same news from the kitchen. At least twenty times different telephonists and *agents de liaison* had brought the familiar story. The soup corvées assured us that the drivers of the rolling kitchens had orders to hitch up and pull out toward Souain and Suippes. The telephonists had listened to the order transmitted over the wires. The *agents de liaison* had overheard the major telling other officers that he had received marching orders, and, '*ma foi!* each time each one was wrong!' So, after all, I was not much disappointed when the order came to unmake the sacks.

We stayed that night and all day, and when the order to march the next evening came, all of us were surprised, including the captain. I was with the One Hundred and Seventy-Second, having some fun with a little Belgian. I had come upon him in the dark and had watched him, in growing wonder at his actions. There he was, stamping up and down, every so often stopping, shaking clenched fists in the air, and spouting curses. I asked him what was the matter. 'Rien, mon sergent,' he replied. 'Je m'excite.' 'Pourquoi?' I demanded. 'Ah,' he told me, 'look,' — pointing out toward the German line, — 'out there lies my friend, dead, with three pounds of my chocolate in his *musette*, and when I'm good and mad, I'm going out to get it!' I hope he got it!

That night at seven o'clock we left the hill, marched through Souain four miles to Suippes, and sixteen miles farther on, at St. Hilaire, we camped. A total of twenty-six miles for the day.

At Suippes the regiment passed in parade march before some officer of the staff, and we were counted: eight hundred and fifty-two in the entire regiment, out of three thousand two hundred who entered the attack on the 25th of September!

THE BOULEVARD OF ROGUES

BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON

NOTHING was ever funnier than Barton's election to the City Council. However, it occurs to me that, if I'm going to speak of it at all, I may as well tell the whole story.

At the University Club, where a dozen of us have met for luncheon every business day for many years, Barton's ideas on the subject of municipal reform were always received in the most contumelious fashion. We shared his rage that things were as they were, but as practical business men we knew that there was no remedy. A city, Barton held, should be conducted like any other corporation. Its affairs are so various, and touch so intimately the comfort and security of all of us, that it is imperative that they be administered by servants of indubitable character and special training. He would point out that a citizen's rights and privileges are similar to those of a stockholder, and that taxes are in effect assessments to which we submit only in the belief that the sums demanded are necessary to the wise handling of the public business; that we should be as anxious for dividends in the form of efficient and economical service as we are for cash dividends in other corporations.

There is nothing foolish or unreasonable in these notions; but most of us are not as ingenious as Barton, or as resourceful as he in finding means of realizing them.

Barton is a lawyer and something of a cynic. I have never known a man whose command of irony equaled his. He usually employed it, however, with perfect good-nature, and it was impossible to ruffle him. In the court-room I

have seen him the target for attacks by a formidable array of opposing counsel, and have heard him answer an hour's argument in an incisive reply compressed into ten minutes. His suggestions touching municipal reforms we dismissed as impractical, which was absurd, for Barton is essentially a practical man, as his professional successes clearly proved before he was thirty.

He maintained that one capable man, working alone, could revolutionize a city's government if he set about it in the right spirit; and he manifested the greatest scorn for 'movements,' committees of one hundred, and that sort of thing. He had no great confidence in the mass of mankind or in the soundness of the majority. His ideas were, we thought, often fantastic, but it could never be said that he lacked the courage of his convictions. He once assembled round a mahogany table the presidents of the six principal banks and trust companies in our town, and laid before them a plan by which, through the smothering of the city's credit, a particularly vicious administration might be brought to terms. The city finances were in a bad way, and, as the result of a policy of wastefulness and shortsightedness, the administration was constantly seeking temporary loans, which the local banks were expected to carry. Barton dissected the municipal budget before the financiers, and proposed that, as another temporary accommodation was about to be asked, they put the screws on the mayor and demand that he immediately force the resignations of all his important appointees and replace them with men to be designated by three citizens to be named by the bankers. Barton had carefully formulated the whole matter, and he presented it with his usual clarity and effectiveness; but rivalry between the banks for the city's business, and fear of incurring the displeasure of some of their individual depositors who were closely allied

with the bosses of the bi-partisan machine, caused the scheme to be rejected. Our lunch-table strategy board was highly amused by Barton's failure, which was just what we had predicted.

Barton accepted his defeat with equanimity and spoke kindly of the bankers as good men but deficient in courage. But in the primaries the following spring he got himself nominated for city councilman. No one knew just how he had accomplished this. Of course, as things go in our American cities, no one qualified for membership in a university club is eligible for any municipal office, and no man of our acquaintance had ever before offered himself for a position soiled through many years by ignoble use.

Even more amazing than Barton's nomination was Barton's election. Our councilmen are elected at large, and we had assumed that any strength he might develop in the more prosperous residential districts would be overbalanced by losses in industrial neighborhoods. The results proved to be quite otherwise. Barton ran his own campaign. He made no speeches, but spent the better part of two months personally appealing to mechanics and laborers, usually in their homes or on their doorsteps. He was at pains to keep out of the newspapers, and his own party organization (he is a Republican) gave him only the most grudging support.

We joked him a good deal about his election to an office that promised nothing to a man of his character but annoyance and humiliation. His associates on the Council were machine men, who had no knowledge whatever of enlightened methods of conducting cities. The very terminology in which municipal government is discussed by the informed was as strange to them as Sanskrit. His Republican colleagues cheerfully ignored him, and shut him out of their caucuses; the Democrats resented his appearance in

the Council chamber as an unwarranted intrusion — 'almost an indelicacy,' to use Barton's own phrase.

The biggest joke of all was Barton's appointment to the chairmanship of the Committee on Municipal Art. That this was the only recognition his associates accorded to the keenest lawyer in the state, — a man possessing a broad knowledge of municipal methods, gathered in every part of the world, — was ludicrous, it must be confessed; but Barton was not in the least disturbed, and continued to suffer our chaff with his usual good humor.

Barton is a secretive person, but we learned later that he had meekly asked the president of the Council to give him this appointment. And it was conferred upon him chiefly because no one else wanted it, there being, obviously 'nothing in' municipal art discernible to the bleared eye of the average councilman.

About that time old Sam Follonsby died, bequeathing half a million dollars — twice as much as anybody knew he had — to be spent on fountains and statues in the city parks and along the boulevards.

The many attempts of the administration to divert the money to other uses; the efforts of the mayor to throw the estate into the hands of a hungry trust company in which he had friends — these matters need not be recited here. Suffice it to say that Barton was equal to all the demands made upon his legal genius. When the estate was settled at the end of a year, Barton had won every point. Follonsby's money was definitely set aside by the court as a special fund for the objects specified by the testator, and Barton, as the Chairman of the Committee on Municipal Art, had so tied it up in a legal mesh of his own ingenious contriving that it was, to all intents and purposes, subject only to his personal check.

It was now that Barton, long irritated by the indifference

of our people to the imperative need of municipal reform, devised a plan for arousing the apathetic electorate. A philosopher, as well as a connoisseur in the fine arts, he had concluded that our whole idea of erecting statues to the good and noble serves no purpose in stirring patriotic impulses in the bosoms of beholders. There were plenty of statues and not a few tablets in our town, commemorating great-souled men, but they suffered sadly from public neglect. And it must be confessed that the average statue, no matter how splendid the achievements of its subject, is little regarded and serves only passively as a reminder of public duty.

With what has seemed to me a sublime cynicism, Barton proceeded to spend Follonsby's money in a manner at once novel and arresting. He commissioned one of the most distinguished sculptors in the country to design a statue; and at the end of his second year in the Council (he had been elected for four years), it was set up on the new boulevard that parallels the river.

His choice of a subject had never been made known, so that curiosity was greatly excited on the day of the unveiling. Barton had brought the governor of an adjoining state, who was just then much in the public eye as a fighter of grafters, to deliver the oration. It was a speech with a sting to it, but our people had long been hardened to such lashings. The mayor spoke in praise of the civic spirit which had impelled Follonsby to make so large a bequest to the public; and then, before five thousand persons, a little schoolgirl pulled the cord, and the statue, a splendid creation in heroic bronze, was exposed to the amazed populace.

I shall not undertake to depict the horror and chagrin of the assembled citizens when they beheld, instead of the statute of Follonsby, which they were prepared to see, or a symbolic representation of the city itself as a flower-

crowned maiden, the familiar pudgy figure, reproduced with the most cruel fidelity, of Mike O'Grady, known as 'Silent Mike,' a big bi-partisan boss who had for years dominated municipal affairs, and who had but lately gone to his reward. The inscription in itself was an ironic masterstroke: —

To
Michael P. O'Grady
Protector of Saloons, Friend of Crooks
For Ten Years a City Councilman
Dominating the Affairs of the Municipality
This Statute is Erected
By Grateful Fellow-Citizens
In Recognition of his Public Services

The effect of this was tremendously disturbing, as may be imagined. Every newspaper in America printed a picture of the O'Grady statue; our rival cities made merry over it at our expense. The Chamber of Commerce, incensed at the affront to the city's good name, passed resolutions condemning Barton in the bitterest terms; the local press howled; a mass meeting was held in our biggest hall to voice public indignation. But amid the clamor Barton remained calm, pointing to the stipulation in Follonsby's will that his money should be spent in memorials of men who had enjoyed most fully the confidence of the people. And as O'Grady had been permitted for years to run the town about as he liked, with only feeble protests and occasional futile efforts to get rid of him, Barton was able to defend himself against all comers.

Six months later Barton set up on the same boulevard a handsome tablet commemorating the services of a mayor whose venality had brought the city to the verge of bankruptcy, and who, when his term of office expired, had betaken himself to parts unknown. This was greeted with another outburst of rage, much to Barton's delight. After

a brief interval another tablet was placed on one of the river bridges. The building of that particular bridge had been attended with much scandal, and the names of the councilmanic committee who were responsible for it were set forth over these figures: —

Cost to the People,	$49,000.00
Cost to the Council,	31,272.81
Graft,	$17,727.19

The figures were exact and a matter of record. An impudent prosecuting attorney who had broken with the machine had laid them before the public some time earlier; but his efforts to convict the culprits had been frustrated by a judge of the criminal court who took orders from the bosses. Barton broke his rule against talking through the newspapers by issuing a caustic statement imploring the infuriated councilmen to sue him for libel as they threatened to do.

The city was beginning to feel the edge of Barton's little ironies. At the club we all realized that he was animated by a definite and high purpose in thus flaunting in enduring bronze the shame of the city.

'It is to such men as these,' said Barton, referring to the gentlemen he had favored with his statue and tablets, 'that we confide all our affairs. For years we have stupidly allowed a band of outlaws to run our town. They spend our money; they hitch the saloons and brothels to the city hall, and manage in their own way large affairs that concern all of us. These scoundrels are our creatures, and we encourage and foster them; they represent us and our ideals, and it's only fitting that we should publish their merits to the world.'

While Barton was fighting half a dozen injunction suits brought to thwart the further expenditure of Follonsby's

money for memorials of men of notorious misfeasance or malfeasance, another city election rolled round. By this time there had been a revulsion of feeling. The people began to see that after all there might be a way of escape. Even the newspapers that had most bitterly assailed Barton declared that he was just the man for the mayoralty, and he was fairly driven into office at the head of a non-partisan municipal ticket.

The Boulevard of Rogues we called it for a time. But after Barton had been in the mayor's office a year he dumped the O'Grady statue into the river, destroyed the tablets, and returned to the Follonsby Fund out of his own pocket the money he had paid for them. Three noble statues of honest patriots now adorn the boulevard, and half a dozen beautiful fountains have been distributed among the parks.

The Barton plan is, I submit, worthy of all emulation. If every boss-ridden, machine-managed American city could once visualize its shame and folly as Barton compelled us to do, there would be less complaint about the general failure of local government. There is, when you come to think of it, nothing so preposterous in the idea of perpetuating in outward and visible forms the public servants we humbly permit to misgovern us. Nothing could be better calculated to quicken the civic impulse in the lethargic citizen than the enforced contemplation of a line of statues erected to the men he has allowed to govern him and spend his money.

I am a little sorry, though, that Barton never carried out one of his plans, which looked to the planting in the centre of a down-town park of a symbolic figure of the city, felicitously expressed by a bar-room loafer dozing on a beer-keg. I should have liked it; and Barton confessed to me the other day that he was a good deal grieved himself that he had not pulled it off!

WHAT HAPPENED TO ALANNA

BY KATHLEEN NORRIS

A CAPPED and aproned maid, with a martyred expression, had twice sounded the dinner-bell in the stately halls of Costello, before any member of the family saw fit to respond to it.

Then they all came at once, with a sudden pounding of young feet on the stairs, an uproar of young voices, and much banging of doors. Jim and Danny, twins of fourteen, to whom their mother was wont proudly to allude as 'the top o' the line,' violently left their own sanctum on the fourth floor, and coasted down such banisters as lay between that and the dining-room. Teresa, an angel-faced twelve-year-old in a blue frock, shut *The Wide, Wide World* with a sigh, and climbed down from the window-seat in the hall.

Teresa's pious mother, in moments of exultation, loved to compare and commend her offspring to such of the saints and martyrs as their youthful virtues suggested. And Teresa at twelve had, as it were, graduated from the little saints, Agnes and Rose and Cecilia, and was now compared, in her mother's secret heart, to the gracious Queen of all the Saints. 'As she was when a little girl,' Mrs. Costello would add, to herself, to excuse any undue boldness in the thought.

And indeed, Teresa, as she was to-night, her blue eyes still clouded with Ellen Montgomery's sorrows, her curls tumbled about her hot cheeks, would have made a pretty foil in a picture of old Saint Anne.

But this story is about Alanna of the black eyes, the

eight years, the large irregular mouth, the large irregular features.

Alanna was outrunning lazy little Leo — her senior, but not her match at anything — on their way to the dining-room. She was rendering desperate the two smaller boys, Frank X., Jr., and John Henry Newman Costello, who staggered hopelessly in her wake. They were all hungry, clean, and good-natured, and Alanna's voice led the other voices, even as her feet, in twinkling patent leather, led their feet.

Following the children came their mother, fastening the rich silk and lace at her wrists as she came. Her handsome kindly face and her big shapely hands were still moist and glowing from soap and warm water, and the shining rings of black hair at her temples were moist, too.

'This is all my doin', dad,' said she comfortably, as she and her flock entered the dining-room. 'Put the soup on, Alma. I 'm the one that was goin' to be prompt at dinner, too!' she added, with a superintending glance for all the children, as she tied on little John's napkin.

F. X. Costello, Senior, undertaker by profession, and mayor by an immense majority, was already at the head of the table.

'Late, eh, mommie?' said he, good-naturedly.

He threw his newspaper on the floor, cast a householder's critical glance at the lights and the fire, and pushed his neatly placed knives and forks to right and left carelessly with both his fat hands.

The room was brilliantly lighted and warm. A great fire roared in the old-fashioned black-marble grate, and electric lights blazed everywhere. Everything in the room, and in the house, was costly, comfortable, incongruous, and hideous. The Costellos were very rich, and had been very poor; and certain people were fond of telling of the

queer, ridiculous things they did, in trying to spend their money. But they were very happy, and thought their immense, ugly house was the finest in the city, or in the world.

'Well, an' what's the news on the Rialter?' said the head of the house, busy with his soup.

'You'll have the laugh on me, dad,' his wife assured him placidly. 'After all my sayin' that nothing'd take me to Father Crowley's meetin'!'

'Oh, that was it?' said the mayor. 'What's he goin' to have — a concert?'

'— *And* a fair, too!' supplemented Mrs. Costello. There was an interval devoted on her part to various bibs and trays, and a low aside to the waitress. Then she went on: 'As you know, I went, meanin' to beg off. On account of baby bein' so little, and Leo's cough, and the paperers bein' upstairs — and all! I thought I'd just make a donation, and let it go at that. But the ladies all kind of hung back — there was very few there — and I got talkin' — '

'Well, 't is but our dooty, after all,' said the mayor, nodding approval.

'That's all, Frank. Well! So finally Mrs. Kiljohn took the coffee, and the Lemmon girls took the grab-bag. The Guild will look out for the concert, and I took one fancy-work booth, and of course, the Children of Mary 'll have the other, just like they always do.'

'Oh, was Grace there?' Teresa was eager to know.

'Grace was, darlin'.'

'And we're to have the fancy-work! You'll help us, won't you, mother? Goody — I 'm in that!' exulted Teresa.

'I'm in that, too!' echoed Alanna quickly.

'A lot you are, you baby!' said Leo unkindly.

'You're not a Child of Mary, Alanna,' Teresa said, promptly and uneasily.

'Well — *well* — I can help!' protested Alanna, putting up her lip. '*Can't I*, mother? Can't I, mother?'

'You can help *me*, dovey,' said her mother absently. 'I'm not goin' to work as I did for Saint Patrick's Bazaar, dad, and I said so! Mrs. O'Connell and Mrs. King said they'd do all the work, if I'd just be the nominal head. Mary Murray will do us some pillers — leather — with Gibsons and Indians on them. And I 'll have Lizzie Bayne up here for a month, makin' me aprons and little Jappy wrappers, and so on.'

She paused over the cutlets and the chicken pie, which she had been helping with an amazing attention to personal preference. The young Costellos chafed at the delay, but their mother's fine eyes saw them not.

'Kelley & Moffat ought to let me have materials at half price,' she reflected aloud. 'My bill's six or seven hundred a month!'

'You always say you're not going to do a thing, and then get in and make more than any other booth!' said Dan proudly.

'Oh, not this year, I won't,' his mother assured him. But in her heart she knew she would.

'Are n't you glad it's fancy-work?' said Teresa. 'It does n't get all sloppy and mussy like ice-cream, does it, mother?'

'Gee, don't you love fairs!' burst out Leo rapturously.

'Sliding up and down the floor before the dance begins, Dan, to work in the wax?' suggested Jimmy, in pleasant anticipation. 'We go every day and every night, don't we, mother?'

'Ask your father,' said Mrs. Costello discreetly.

But the mayor's attention just then was taken by Alanna, who had left her chair to go and whisper in his ear.

'Why, here 's Alanna's heart broken!' said he cheerfully, encircling her little figure with a big arm.

Alanna shrank back suddenly against him, and put her wet cheek on his shoulder.

'Now, whatever is it, darlin'?' wondered her mother, sympathetically but without concern. 'You've not got a pain, have you, dear?'

'She wants to help the Children of Mary!' said her father tenderly. 'She wants to do as much as Tessie does!'

'Oh, but, dad, she *can't!*' fretted Teresa. 'She's not a Child of Mary! She ought n't to want to tag that way. Now all the other girls' sisters will tag!'

'They have n't got sisters!' said Alanna, red-cheeked of a sudden.

'Why, Mary Alanna Costello, they have too! Jean has, and Stella has, and Grace has her little cousins!' protested Teresa triumphantly.

'Never mind, baby,' said Mrs. Costello hurriedly. 'Mother'll find you something to do. There now! How'd you like to have a raffle-book on something — a chair or a piller? And you could get all the names yourself, and keep the money in a little bag — '

'Oh, my! I wish I could!' said Jim artfully. 'Think of the last night, when the drawing comes! You'll have the fun of looking up the winning number in your book and calling it out in the hall.'

'Would I, dad?' said Alanna softly, but with dawning interest.

'And then, from the pulpit, when the returns are all in,' contributed Dan warmly, 'Father Crowley will read out your name, — "With Mrs. Frank Costello's booth — raffle of sofa cushion, by Miss Alanna Costello, twenty-six dollars and thirty-five cents!"

'Oo — would he, dad?' said Alanna, won to smiles and dimples by this charming prospect.

'Of course he would!' said her father. 'Now go back to your seat, machree, and eat your dinner. When mommer takes you and Tess to the matinée to-morrow, ask her to bring you in to me first, and you and I'll step over to Paul's, and pick out a table or a couch, or something. Eh, mommie?'

'And what do you say? ' said that lady to Alanna, as the radiant little girl went back to her chair.

Whereupon Alanna breathed a bashful 'Thank you, dad,' into the ruffled yoke of her frock, and the matter was settled.

The next day she trotted beside her father to Paul's big furniture store, and after long hesitation selected a little desk of shining brass and dull oak.

'Now,' said her father, when they were back in his office, and Teresa and Mrs. Costello were eager for the matinée, 'here's your book of numbers, Alanna. And here, I'll tie a pencil and a string to it. Don't lose it. I've given you two hundred numbers, at two bits each, and mind, the minute any one pays for one, you put their name down on the same line!'

'Oo, — oo!' said Alanna, in pride. 'Two hundred! That's lots of money, is n't it, dad? That's eleven or fourteen dollars, is n't it, dad?'

'That's fifty dollars, goose!' said her father, making a dot with the pencil on the tip of her upturned little nose.

'Oo!' said Teresa, awed. Hatted, furred, and muffed, she leaned on her father's shoulder.

'Oo — dad!' whispered Alanna, with scarlet cheeks.

'So *now!*' said her mother, with a little nod of encouragement and warning. 'Put it right in your muff, lovey. Don't lose it. Dan or Jim will help you count your money, and keep things straight.'

'And to begin with, we'll all take a chance!' said the

mayor, bringing his fat palm, full of silver, up from his pocket. 'How old are you, mommie?'

'I'm thirty-seven — all but, as well you know, Frank!' said his wife promptly.

'Thirty-six *and* thirty-seven for you, then!' He wrote her name opposite both numbers. 'And here's the mayor on the same page — forty-four! And twelve for Tessie, and eight for this highbinder on my knee, here! And now we 'll have one for little Gertie!'

Gertrude Costello was not yet three months old, her mother said.

'Well, she can have number one, any way!' said the mayor. 'You make a rejooced rate for one family, I understand, Miss Costello?'

'I *don't!*' chuckled Alanna, locking her thin little arms about his neck, and digging her chin into his eye.

So he gave her full price, and she went off with her mother in a state of great content, between rows and rows of coffins, and cases of plumes, and handles and rosettes, and designs for monuments.

'Mrs. Church will want some chances, won't she, mother?' she said suddenly.

'Let Mrs. Church alone, darlin',' advised Mrs. Costello. 'She's not a Catholic, and there's plenty to take chances without her!'

Alanna reluctantly assented; but she need not have worried. Mrs. Church voluntarily took many chances, and became very enthusiastic about the desk.

She was a pretty, clever young woman, of whom all the Costellos were very fond. She lived with a very young husband, and a very new baby, in a tiny cottage near the big Irish family, and pleased Mrs. Costello by asking her advice on all domestic matters, and taking it. She made the Costello children welcome at all hours in her tiny, shin-

ing kitchen, or sunny little dining-room. She made them candy and told them stories. She was a minister's daughter, and wise in many delightful, girlish, friendly ways.

And in return Mrs. Costello did her many a kindly act, and sent her almost daily presents in the most natural manner imaginable.

But Mrs. Church made Alanna very unhappy about the raffled desk. It so chanced that it matched exactly the other furniture in Mrs. Church's rather bare little drawing-room, and this made her eager to win it. Alanna, at eight, long familiar with raffles and their ways, realized what a very small chance Mrs. Church stood of getting the desk. It distressed her very much to notice that lady's growing certainty of success.

She took chance after chance. And with every chance she warned Alanna of the dreadful results of her not winning; and Alanna, with a worried line between her eyes, protested her helplessness afresh.

'She *will* do it, dad!' the little girl confided to him one evening, when she and her book and her pencil were on his knee. 'And it *worries* me so.'

'Oh, I hope she wins it,' said Teresa ardently. 'She 's not a Catholic, but we're praying for her. And you know people who are n't Catholics, dad, are apt to think that our fairs are pretty — pretty *money-making*, you know!'

'And if only she could point to that desk,' said Alanna, 'and say that she won it at a Catholic fair.'

'But she won't,' said Teresa, suddenly cold.

'I'm *praying* she will,' said Alanna suddenly.

'Oh, I don't think you ought, do you, dad?' said Teresa gravely. 'Do you think she ought, mommie? That 's just like her pouring her holy water over the kitten. You ought n't to do those things.'

'I ought to,' said Alanna, in a whisper that reached only her father's ear.

'You suit me, whatever you do,' said Mayor Costello, 'and Mrs. Church can take her chances with the rest of us.'

Mrs. Church seemed to be quite willing to do so. When at last the great day of the fair came, she was one of the first to reach the hall, in the morning, to ask Mrs. Costello how she might be of use.

'Now wait a minute, then!' said Mrs. Costello cordially. She straightened up as she spoke, from an inspection of a box of fancy-work. 'We could only get into the hall this hour gone, my dear, and 't was a sight, after the Native Sons' Banquet last night. It'll be a miracle if we get things in order for to-night. Father Crowley said he 'd have three carpenters here this morning at nine, without fail; but not one's come yet. That 's the way!'

'Oh, we'll fix things,' said Mrs. Church, shaking out a dainty little apron.

Alanna came briskly up, and beamed at her. The little girl was driving about on all sorts of errands for her mother, and had come in to report.

'Mother, I went home,' she said, in a breathless rush, 'and told Alma four extra were coming to lunch, and here are your big scissors, and I told the boys you wanted them to go out to Uncle Dan's for greens, they took the buckboard, and I went to Keyser's for the cheesecloth, and he had only eighteen yards of pink, but he thinks Kelley's have more, and there are the tacks, and they don't keep spool-wire, and the electrician will be here in ten minutes.'

'Alanna, you're the pride of me life,' said her mother, kissing her. 'That's all now, dearie. Sit down and rest.'

'Oh, but I 'd rather go round and see things,' said Alanna, and off she went.

The immense hall was filled with the noise of voices,

hammers, and laughter. Groups of distracted women were forming and dissolving everywhere around chaotic masses of boards and bunting. Whenever a carpenter started for the door, or entered it, he was waylaid, bribed, and bullied by the frantic superintendents of the various booths. Messengers came and went, staggering under masses of evergreen, carrying screens, rope, suit-cases, baskets, boxes, Japanese lanterns, freezers, rugs, ladders, and tables.

Alanna found the stage fascinating. Lunch and dinner were to be served there, for the five days of the fair, and it had been set with many chairs and tables, fenced with ferns and bamboo. Alanna was charmed to arrange knives and forks, to unpack oily hams and sticky cakes, and great bowls of salad, and to store them neatly away in a green room.

The grand piano had been moved down to the floor. Now and then an audacious boy or two banged on it for the few moments that it took his mother's voice or hands to reach him. Little girls gently played 'The Carnival of Venice' or 'Echoes of the Ball,' with their scared eyes alert for reproof. And once two of the 'big' Sodality girls came up, assured and laughing and dusty, and boldly performed one of their convent duets. Some of the tired women in the booths straightened up and clapped, and called, '*Encore!*'

Teresa was not one of these girls. Her instrument was the violin; moreover, she was busy and absorbed at the Children of Mary's booth, which by four o'clock began to blossom all over its white-draped pillars and tables with ribbons and embroidery and tissue paper, and cushions and aprons and collars, and all sorts of perfumed prettiness.

The two priests were constantly in evidence, their cassocks and hands showing unaccustomed dust.

And over all the confusion, Mrs. Costello shone supreme. Her brisk, big figure, with skirts turned back, and a blue apron still further protecting them, was everywhere at once; laughter and encouragement marked her path. She wore a paper of pins on the breast of her silk dress, she had a tack-hammer thrust in her belt. In her apron-pockets were string, and wire, and tacks. A big pair of scissors hung at her side, and a pencil was thrust through her smooth black hair. She advised and consulted and directed; even with the priests it was to be observed that her mild, 'Well, Father, it seems to me,' always won the day. She led the electricians a life of it; she became the terror of the carpenters' lives.

Where was the young lady that played the violin going to stay? Send her up to Mrs. Costello's. — Heavens! We were short a tablecloth! Oh, but Mrs. Costello had just sent Dan home for one. — How on earth could the Male Quartette from Tower Town find its way to the hall? Mrs. Costello had promised to tell Mr. C. to send a carriage for them.

She came up to the Children of Mary's booth about five o'clock.

'Well, if you girls ain't the wonders!' she said to the tired little Sodalists, in a tone of unbounded admiration and surprise. 'You make me ashamed of me own booth. This is beautiful.'

'Oh, do you think so, mother?' said Teresa wistfully, clinging to her mother's arm.

'I think it's grand!' said Mrs. Costello, with conviction. There was a delighted laugh. 'I'm going to bring all the ladies up to see it.'

'Oh, I'm so glad!' said all the girls together, reviving visibly.

'An' the pretty things you got!' went on the cheering

matron. 'You'll clear eight hundred if you'll clear a cent. And now put me down for a chance or two; don't be scared, Mary Riordan; four or five! I'm goin' to bring Mr. Costello over here to-night, and don't you let him off too easy.'

Everyone laughed joyously.

'Did you hear of Alanna's luck?' said Mrs. Costello. 'When the Bishop got here, he took her all around the hall with him, and between this one and that, every last one of her chances is gone. She could n't keep her feet on the floor for joy. The lucky girl! They 're waitin' for you, Tess, darlin', with the buckboard. Go home and lay down a while before dinner.'

'Are n't you lucky!' said Teresa, as she climbed a few minutes later into the back seat with Jim, and Dan pulled out the whip.

Alanna, swinging her legs, gave a joyful assent. She was too happy to talk, but the other three had much to say.

'Mother thinks we'll make eight hundred dollars,' said Teresa.

'*Gee!*' said the twins together; and Dan added, 'If only Mrs. Church wins that desk, now!'

'Who 's going to do the drawing of numbers?' Jimmy wondered.

'Bishop,' said Dan; 'and he'll call down from the platform, "Number twenty-six wins the desk." And then Alanna'll look in her book, and pipe up and say, "Daniel Ignatius Costello, the handsomest fellow in the parish, wins the desk."'

'Twenty-six is Harry Plummer,' said Alanna seriously, looking up from her chance-book; at which they all laughed.

'But take care of that book,' warned Teresa, as she climbed down.

'Oh, I will!' responded Alanna fervently.

And through the next four happy days she did, and took the precaution of tying it by a stout cord to her arm.

Then on Saturday, the last afternoon, quite late, when her mother had suggested that she go home with Leo and Jack and Frank and Gertrude and the nurses, Alanna felt the cord hanging loose against her hand, and looking down, saw that the book was gone.

She was holding out her arms for her coat when this took place, and she went cold all over. But she did not move, and Minnie buttoned her in snugly, and tied the ribbons of her hat with cold, hard knuckles, without suspecting anything.

Then Alanna disappeared, and Mrs. Costello sent the maids and babies on without her. It was getting dark and cold for the small Costellos.

But the hour was darker and colder for Alanna. She searched and she hoped and she prayed in vain. She stood up, after a long hands-and-knees expedition under the tables where she had been earlier, and pressed her right hand over her eyes, and said aloud in her misery, 'Oh, I *can't* have lost it! I *can't* have. Oh, don't let me have lost it!'

She went here and there as if propelled by some mechanical force, a wretched, restless little figure. And when the dreadful moment came when she must give up searching, she crept in beside her mother in the carriage, and longed only for some honorable death.

When they all went back at eight o'clock, she recommenced her search feverishly, with that cruel alternation of hope and despair and weariness that everyone knows. The crowds, the lights, the music, the laughter, and the noise, and the pervading odor of popcorn were not real, when a shabby brown little book was her whole world, and she could not find it.

'The drawing will begin,' said Alanna, 'and the Bishop will call out the number! And what'll I say? Everyone will look at me; and *how* can I say I've lost it! Oh, what a baby they'll call me!'

'Father'll pay the money back,' she said, in sudden relief. But the impossibility of that swiftly occurred to her, and she began hunting again with fresh terror.

'But, he can't! How can he? A hundred names; and I don't know them, or half of them.'

Then she felt the tears coming, and she crept in under some benches, and cried.

She lay there a long time, listening to the curious hum and buzz above her. And at last it occurred to her to go to the Bishop, and tell this old, kind friend the truth.

But she was too late. As she got to her feet, she heard her own name called from the platform, in the Bishop's voice.

'Where's Alanna Costello? Ask her who has number eighty-three on the desk. Eighty-three wins the desk! Find little Alanna Costello!'

Alanna had no time for thought. Only one course of action occurred to her. She cleared her throat.

'Mrs. Will Church has that number, Bishop,' she said.

The crowd about her gave way, and the Bishop saw her, rosy, embarrassed, and breathless.

'Ah, there you are!' said the Bishop. 'WHO has it?'

'Mrs. Church, your Grace,' said Alanna, calmly this time.

'Well, did you *ever!*' said Mrs. Costello to the Bishop.

She had gone up to claim a mirror she had won — a mirror with a gold frame, and lilacs and roses painted lavishly on its surface.

'Gee, I bet Alanna was pleased about the desk!' said Dan in the carriage.

'Mrs. Church nearly cried,' Teresa said. 'But where'd Alanna go to? I could n't find her until just a few minutes ago, and then she was so queer!'

'It's my opinion she was dead tired,' said her mother. 'Look how sound she's asleep! Carry her up, Frank. I'll keep her in bed in the morning.'

They kept Alanna in bed for many mornings, for her secret weighed on her soul, and she failed suddenly in color, strength, and appetite. She grew weak and nervous, and one afternoon, when the Bishop came to see her, worked herself into such a frenzy that Mrs. Costello wonderingly consented to her entreaty that he should not come up.

She would not see Mrs. Church, or go to see the desk in its new house, or speak of the fair in any way. But she did ask her mother who swept out the hall after the fair.

'I did a good deal meself,' said Mrs. Costello, dashing one hope to the ground.

Alanna leaned back in her chair, sick with disappointment.

One afternoon, about a week after the fair, she was brooding over the fire. The other children were at the matinée, Mrs. Costello was out, and a violent storm was whirling about the nursery windows.

Presently, Annie, the laundress, put her frowsy head in at the door. She was a queer, warm-hearted Irish girl; her big arms were still steaming from the tub, and her apron was wet.

'Ahl alone?' said Annie with a broad smile.

'Yes; come in, won't you, Annie?' said little Alanna.

'I cahn't. I'm at the toobs,' said Annie, coming in nevertheless. 'I was doin' all the tableclot's and napkins, an' out drops your little buke!'

'My — what did you say?' said Alanna, very white.

'Your little buke,' said Annie.

She laid the chance-book on the table, and proceeded to mend the fire.

Alanna sank back in her chair. She twisted her fingers together, and tried to think of an appropriate prayer.

'Thank you, Annie,' she said weakly, when the laundress went out. Then she sprang for the book. It slipped twice from her cold little fingers before she could open it.

'Eighty-three!' she said hoarsely. 'Sixty — seventy — eighty-three!'

She looked and looked and looked. She shut the book and opened it again, and looked. She laid it on the table, and walked away from it, and then came back suddenly, and looked. She laughed over it, and cried over it, and thought how natural it was, and how wonderful it was, all in the space of ten blissful minutes.

And then, with returning appetite and color and peace of mind, her eyes filled with pity for the wretched little girl who had watched this same sparkling, delightful fire so drearily a few minutes ago.

Her small soul was steeped in gratitude. She crooked her arm and put her face down on it, and sank to her knees.

SPENDTHRIFTS

BY LAURA SPENCER PORTOR

I

THE story I am about to tell I have never told before. The events in it took place when I was a child of fifteen, an oldish child of fifteen. I had a taste for books and dreams, and a kind of adoring love of older people; a predilection, too, for romance and wonderment. There were many things I meant to do some day.

Among my lesser resolves was one that I had held for a good many years: I mean the resolve some day to be a passenger in the absurd old-fashioned 'bus that had made its daily journey, ever since I could remember, from my home town to a small town quite off the railroad, and some twelve miles away, the county-seat of that county in which my home was situated.

The 'bus was an extraordinary-looking vehicle. It had the air of a huge beetle. It creaked and rattled when it was in action. It had enormous dipping springs. It lunged and rolled a bit from side to side as it went. Its top bulged and had ribs across it and a low iron railing around it, convenient for the lashing of ropes to hold the packages of all kinds and sizes with which it usually went laden. There was a door at the back and there were two steps by which to enter. It had the air of being a distinguished character, even among the antiquated and entirely individual types of vehicle still common then in the little old-fashioned town.

This air was, no doubt, due chiefly to the large oval pictures painted, not without some skill, on its sides. One of these depicted the rescue of Daniel Boone by Kenton, who

with the butt of a large musket was perpetually about to brain a murderous Indian; the other dealt with Smith's unchanging obligation to Pocahontas.

I hardly think Keats had more lasting enjoyment of his Grecian urn with 'brede of marble men and maidens overwrought' than I of those pictures, where, not less than in the more classic example, I saw perpetually preserved what I took to be the most thrilling and desirable of moments, death forever arrested by unending loyalty and undying affection.

But, interesting as all this was, it was by no means the heart of that strange fascination with which, for so many years, I contemplated the old beetling vehicle. Its fascination lay for me in its daily journey to parts beyond the bounds of my narrow horizon. It plied faithfully every week-day of the year, an envoy extraordinary, ambassador plenipotentiary, between another world and mine. Some day I should see that world and know it.

It must not be supposed, however, that I had in mind only the town to which the 'bus journeyed, the mere inconsiderable county seat. Children's imaginations, especially when the child is just emerging into all the glorious possibilities of womanhood, deal, not in towns, but in worlds. The *world* outside my own narrow bounds of life—that was what I meant to see and experience.

I can think of only one thing, besides the old 'bus, which roused my fancy to an equal degree, namely, the herds of dumb cattle which were driven past my home always once, and sometimes twice a week, to the stockyards which lay somewhere on the outskirts of my home town. If I close my eyes, I can still hear on hot afternoons the dark herds trampling past, a mass of broad backs and spreading horns and wide foreheads, — and dull or occasionally frightened eyes, — and the hurrying hoofs, scuffling the dust.

I had never seen the stockyards. I was never informed very particularly about them, and by some instinct, I suppose, I never inquired too carefully. But I knew this for another world also, and dread as it was, it fascinated me. I believe the hurrying herds stood to me for a kind of world of fearful reality that I meant some day to look into, and the old picture-painted 'bus for a world of romance, yonder, yonder over the dip of the horizon, which not less, some day, I was determined to know.

Just how I came to take my resolve, and the events which precipitated it — all this has no bearing on the story. The story begins just where I stood that hot day in June waiting for the 'bus by the dusty mullens beside the pike. I had walked a good mile outside the town so that none of the townspeople would see the beginning of my adventure.

The 'bus was late, I think, even allowing for my anxiety. It came in sight at last, at a slow beetling pace. I held up a slim finger. But not until he was alongside did the driver begin to draw in the long reins. I ran after the 'bus a few paces, opened the door, climbed the high steps with a beating heart, and got in.

The driver peeked through the little peek-hole in the roof to make sure I was safe; then he called to his horses, and the vehicle lunged ahead.

The only other passengers were an old man, unknown to me, who carried a basket of eggs, and an old woman who lived somewhere outside the town and whom I recognized as one we called the 'horse-radish woman.' She stood always on a Saturday at one corner of our town market, grinding and selling horse-radish roots, blinking with red eyes, and always wiping the tears from them before she could make you your change. I recognized her of course at once, but whether she knew me, I do not know. If she did, she gave not the least evidence of it, but looked out ab-

sently with squinted red-lidded eyes at the country as we jogged along.

The lovely rolling Kentucky land began to spread out on all sides. Long white curves of the pike flowed slowly behind us and were seen in glimpses through the open front windows ahead of us. Dust rose and settled over us.

A little while before we got to Latonia, the old horseradish woman, with a tin cup she carried, knocked on the ceiling of the 'bus near the driver's peep-hole, to warn him that she wished to get out. When we arrived at Latonia and the horses were having water at the big trough, the old man with the basket of eggs also left.

But I was going all the way to the county seat and I considered these passengers much below my own level as travelers. They were merely making a convenience of the 'bus, you see, which just happened to go past their homes; whereas I was off for adventure, my home quite in the other direction, and the world spread wide before me.

It was with a tourist's pleasure, then, that I looked at that little grouping of houses and the elm- and poplar-shaded pike, which in those days was called, and I believe is still called, Latonia; and at the old Latonia Springs Hotel. It was a typical relic of Southern before-the-war hotel architecture, with its white pillars, its long verandas, its wide doorway, its large lawn sombred by very old shade trees.

I had known something of travel. I had lived in France for two years, at school; but there I had always had some one to go about with me. Here, on the contrary, I was alone. I liked the flavor of the adventure; it was novel, and very stimulating. This journey, however poor a thing it might seem to others, had Audrey's superlative virtue: it was mine own. The old hotel, then, already romantic enough, took on an additional romance in my eyes.

The driver came around now from sponging his horses' heads and noses at the trough.

'Going all the way, are you?'

I nodded.

'Well, you can get out and stretch your legs if you like, for we'll be here ten minutes.'

But I did not 'like.' In the 'bus I felt safe enough; but if I got out — adventurous spirit though I was — I knew with unconquerable shyness that everybody would be staring at me.

I contented myself with watching the lazy coming and going of a few people; a dog snapping at flies; some chickens taking dust-baths in the road.

What a still, lazy place it was! Some one asked the time. The driver's watch had stopped. Nobody knew; it appeared not to matter. This seemed no place for clocks. A stout lame man, having the look of a Southern war veteran, stopped on his cane in the middle of the road, looked around carefully at the outlying country and the shadows, then took a calculating glance at the heavens.

'Well, I should reckon, colonel,' he said, addressing the stage-driver, 'it mout be about twenty-two minutes past two. You gen'lly get here about two, but you was a bit late to-day, a leetle bit late, I should say maybe to the amount of about twelve minutes.'

He leaned on his cane again and began dotting his way slowly and heavily through the dust toward the hotel.

I could not have told whether he was in jest or earnest. But as I look back on it now, it seems to me curiously fitting that the little town should have had so scant dependence on timepieces, for it lay away from all the world, and there was so little to occupy the attention, that the houses, the dusty pike, with its slowly lengthening and slowly shortening shadows, the fields beyond, with their great

sycamores and maples, and the sky so little interrupted from edge to edge, must each, indeed, have been to those who had so long observed them, a sundial to make clocks seem mere bustling contrivances.

A big fly sailed in one of the 'bus windows, round and round, droning, and then out; it went with every effect of careful choice and deliberation, to settle on the nose of the old dog that lay, alternately napping and snapping, four feet in the sun.

I can give you no idea of the keen enjoyment with which I noted all these details. I take pleasure now in remembering that, despite the fact that I had lived in Paris, among its thrilling boulevards and monuments, and had seen some stagey Swiss villages and dramatic little French towns, this little cluster of houses known as Latonia, on a dusty pike in Kentucky, only a few miles from my own home, — this village which never a tourist would have gone to see, — was to me in that droning, incredibly quiet afternoon a very piece of romance; the air itself, — I beg you to have patience with me, for really, I tell you only the truth, — the very air itself being 'ambient' for me; the green fields 'amburbial'; the white clouds, so nearly at rest in the blue sky, 'huge symbols of a high romance'; the silver poplars and elms not less than 'immemorial'; and the old hotel a thing made of dreams, haunted with green and shaded memories of before-the-war days, across whose veranda might have stepped at any moment, before my unastonished eyes, the actors in some noble human drama.

I remember, too, that my eye found some dusty marigolds, their blooms leaning through a low paling fence of one of the houses. My eye must have passed over many a marigold before that; I probably never saw one until then. I remember noting their singularity and softness of color, so individual and particular compared with the more cus-

tomary reds and yellows of commoner flowers, so far more memorable and desirable and foreign; a part they seemed, too, of the quietness and strangeness and romance in the midst of which I found myself.

The 'bus driver was making ready to leave.

The lame war veteran, — for I still take him to have been such, — having got as far as the gate of the Latonia Hotel, was met by a long, lazy-legged darkey coming down the walk, carrying two traveling satchels. Noticeably new-looking they were, and handsome, for that part of the world. He had one under his arm, the other dangling from the same hand, which left his other hand free to manipulate a long piece of ribbon-grass which he was chewing lazily. The veteran held the gate open, the weight of his body leaning against it.

'Going away, are they?'

'Yassuh.'

There emerged from the hotel at this moment a man and a woman.

The darkey crossed the road and put the two satchels in the 'bus — and stood with his hand on the handle of the door, holding it wide open, waiting.

II

I watched the two strangers as they approached. When they reached the 'bus the man assisted the woman, in a somewhat formal yet indifferent way. She entered and took her seat nearly diagonally opposite to me. The man plunged his hand in his pocket, brought out a coin, and put it in the darkey's hand, and stooping, for he was tall, entered the 'bus after her. It swayed a little perilously with his weight, and rocked quite a bit before he finally comfortably seated himself directly across from me.

The driver meanwhile had swung himself up on the high

driver's seat. He opened the peep-hole and looked down, then gathered the reins, and clucked to his horses, and the 'bus drove off.

If the town had interested me before, I forgot it now — forgot it quite in the attention, direct and indirect, which I gave to my fellow passengers.

The man was faultlessly dressed. Such clothes were not customary in that corner of the world. The neat derby, the band of which he was even now wiping with a lavender-edged silk handkerchief, was a thing foreign to those parts at that season, cheap straw hats being rather the rule. The tips of the fingers of a pair of new tan gloves were to be seen just looking out from the left breast-pocket of his well-buttoned light gray suit. I could see that he wore a white vest, and his shirt had a little hair-line of purple in it. His hands were large and very white and well kept, the fingers close fitted together. On one of them a conspicuous Mexican opal smouldered in a massive, very dark gold setting.

I have no words, even to this day, to describe the woman who sat a foot or two from him and to whom he addressed his remarks in an indifferently possessive manner.

She was slight; her hair was of a light brown, her eyes of a distinct orange color. Her face sloped delicately from the forehead, which was low enough to be beautiful, and high enough to suggest nobility of thought, down to the lovely line of chin. Her throat was slender and very white, rising from a turned-down Puritan collar. A Puritan cloak of dust-colored linen, with strappings of orange, fell away under the collar in soft and cool lines. Her brown veil had at its edge a line of orange color also. The brown was a shade lighter than her hair; the orange a shade darker than her eyes. The veil carried with it I cannot say what manner of ethereal graciousness, and fell into a wave or floating line

of loveliness as she turned her head. Once, as we dipped into a shaded hollow and across a running stream, a little breeze of coolness came in at the windows. The veil, lifted by it, floated and clung like a living thing to her throat and lips, until her delicate hand put it away gently.

I watched her, very fascinated. She was a creature of another world. That she and the horse-radish woman could live on the same planet spoke volumes for the infinite scale of life.

At first these two new passengers spoke hardly at all. Once the man bent his massive figure to get a better look at the landscape from the window opposite him, and called the attention of his companion to some point in it.

'There! As I recollect it, the property is not unlike that, Louise. It rolls that way, I mean; and Felton's line comes into it just as that snake fence comes across there. It is on the other side that the vein of coal is said to begin.'

Though she gave a courteous hearing, I had the impression that she was not really interested.

She watched the country with a kind of well-bred inattentive glance. For myself I could not take my eyes off her. I watched her with that hunger for beauty which is native to the heart of a child. Above all I watched her eyes. The strange, unusual color of them was in itself a kind of romance. She gave one the impression of being a woman unique; something rare and choice, not to be found again or elsewhere.

Once she turned her head and met my full gaze. I was embarrassed, but I need not have been. She set the matter right by addressing me with a gentle courtesy.

'Do you live out here?'

I shook my head. I meant to reply more fully in a moment when I had recovered myself; but the man spoke.

'Never heard of Thomas Felton, I suppose, did you? Used to live once in Owen County not far from here.'

I shook my head again and formed the word 'No.'

The woman gave him a gentle glance; nothing reproving, but he took it in the manner of reproof.

'Well, I did not know but she might have,' he explained. Then he settled back a little. 'Maybe some one else will get in later who does know. I thought them confoundedly stupid at the hotel. Did n't seem anxious to give any information either. Nobody knows anything in a place like that.'

There was silence again. The fields at one side of the road climbed now, here and there. Low pastures rose to be foothills. Around one of these hills a rocky road appeared sloping down to the pike. Up the road, at a little distance, was a rustic archway like an entrance to a private property. Waiting by the side of the road, stood a figure strange to me, in the garb of some monastic order.

The woman did not notice him. Her glance was far off at the horizon at the other side. The man did. He regarded the stranger with a stolid bold curiosity. Then some idea of his own occurred to him, suddenly. As the 'bus stopped to take on this new passenger, the heavy man rose, to take advantage of its steadiness, no doubt, and stooping so as not to knock his derby against the ceiling of the vehicle, tapped imperatively on the lid of the little peep-hole, and when it was raised, spoke to the driver.

'This road leading up at the side here does n't happen to be the Chorley road, does it, that leads into Felton's woods? They said there was a road at the foot of a hill that led into some timber lands belonging to a man named Felton.'

The driver did not understand. The question had to be repeated. While the man repeated it, the Franciscan —

though I am not entirely sure he was of that order — opened the door of the 'bus. The woman turned her head now. I saw her orange-colored eyes grow wide and large as they noted him. With habitually bent head and regarding none of us, he entered. As he seated himself in the corner, he looked up, however, and his eyes met hers. I saw him start really violently. His color, which was a dark olive, with a too bright crimson under it at the cheek-bones, became suddenly ashy.

There was just that one look between them. The next instant she had turned to the other, returning from his questions with the driver. He had not seen the look that I had noted.

The Franciscan now drew his eyes away from the woman's face, fumbled in the skirt of his habit, and brought out a prayer-book which he opened with fingers that shook.

The heavy man seated himself, exactly opposite the woman, and beside me and within touch of the Franciscan. He addressed the woman.

'I just thought that that might be Chorley's road. They said it ran up a slope. It was n't, though. I thought I'd like to get a sight of the timber. We may try to make him throw that in, in payment.'

He glanced around at the Franciscan, whose eyes were now entirely on his book; took him in, as it were; then let his glance glide off out one of the windows. After a sufficient time, a kind of courteous pause, he leaned forward a little, raised his derby the least bit, and said, 'Excuse me, but I suppose you live here?'

The Franciscan looked up, but answered nothing. The color came surging back suddenly into his face, which was haggard. There was a noncommittal look in his eyes, as though his lips were to say, 'I beg your pardon.'

'I supposed you lived here,' the other said, 'and I

thought you might just happen to know a man named Felton. He came originally from Owen County. We are on here from New York. We are strangers and we know nothing of this country. You don't happen to know' —

The Franciscan gave a gentle smile, raised one slim hand, which yet trembled visibly — a fine deprecating gesture.

'Pardon, m'sieu!'

'Oh, I see.' The other touched his hat with a little motion of withdrawal and clumsy apology. 'I see. I did n't know you were French. I don't speak French myself. Wish I did! Excuse me. Excuse me.'

Here was an occasion! The adventure was turning squarely toward me. I knew French; I was proud of it and eager to offer my services. I could perfectly well act as translator, interpreter for these two. Moreover, it would give me that greatly to be desired thing, the attention of this beautiful woman. Yet I did not dare all this at once. I would wait a moment. How should I break into the conversation? A child of fifteen, however oldish, is shy. Would it be proper for me to say, 'Excuse me, but —?'

As I was thinking of it with a kind of tumult of pride and shyness, the man turned to the woman.

'Look here, Louise; that's a fact! You speak French! Ask him if he knows Thomas Felton's property. Tell him it's Felton who lived over in Owen County and used to be a wealthy man.'

She turned her clear eyes to the Franciscan and spoke in a pure Parisian French.

'This man, my husband, wishes me to ask if you know a Thomas Felton who has property out here in this direction.' In the same tone exactly, she added, 'Do not let him suspect that you know me.'

'Let him think' — the reply came in pure French also —

'that I speak no English. In this way you and I can converse together.'

Her wonderful orange-colored eyes quivered the least bit as she drew them away from the Franciscan and met the waiting eyes of her husband.

She spoke with perfect composure, however.

'He says he believes there was such a man hereabout some years ago.'

Her husband turned quickly as if he himself would further address the Franciscan; then, recollecting that he knew no French, he appealed to her again.

'Now Louise, look here. Try to get it straight. As I told you, there are two men of that name, a nephew and an uncle. It's the uncle I want to get hold of. He is the man who owns the property we want. Ask this man how old this Felton is, this man he knows; I can tell by that.'

She turned again to the Franciscan, and spoke again in French. Indeed they spoke nothing else but that sweet and flowing language, a knowledge of which put me, without my will, in league with them.

'How do you happen to be here?' she questioned.

'I joined the order after I left you,' he said. 'That is, they simply allow me to live with them, chiefly on account of my name, I think; that, and, I think, as an act of mercy. As a kind of lay brother — it is simple. But, this man — he is your husband?'

'Yes, I have been married to him eight months.'

'In God's name!' he said, but in a perfectly even conversational tone. 'And you have suffered. Of course you have suffered.'

They used throughout their conversation, as I have not indicated here, because it sounds forced in English, the familiar and gentle *tutoiement*, the thee-and-thouing of the French.

The husband, understanding nothing of what they said, was watching the two with interest; his small eyes were eager in his heavy face; he was waiting for his answer.

'Do not let us talk too long,' the Franciscan said, and turned with a faintly courteous smile, as though to include the heavy man in the conversation. 'Ask me some more questions,' he said to the woman; 'get him to ask some more questions, I mean. In that way we shall have a little time to talk together.'

She addressed her husband.

'He is not quite sure. He thinks, however, the man he has in mind has a gray beard.'

Her husband drew his large flat fingers down his heavy chin twice, as if stroking an imaginary beard of his own, thoughtfully; his eyes narrowed even more, very speculatively.

'I see, I see! Well now, like as not it's the same one.' Then he put his hands on his knees and leaned forward as though really addressing himself to the business. 'Look here, Louise, you ask him if this man he knows ever had anything to do with a railway — a railway out West and coal lands out there.'

'You must give me time. Let me see! How does one say all that? My French is not so fluent as it once was. I shall have to get at it in a roundabout way. Have patience.'

'Take your time,' he said, leaning back, 'only get at it if you can. It's important.'

She turned now to the Franciscan. But it was he rather who addressed her.

'But what are you going to do about this horrible marriage?'

'Nothing, nothing at all.'

'But, good God, it is desecration! It is like defiling the bread and wine of communion. Does this man kiss you?'

'He owns the better part of two railroads,' she said, with a kind of pitiful look in her eyes. 'He is here now to push to the wall — if he can — a man already overtaken by mischance and misfortune.'

'Why do you evade?' said the other. 'He does of course touch you, he owns you, along with the better part of two railroads. He fondles you at his pleasure. I would not have thought it possible. Not you; not you.'

'You forget,' she said, and still her voice kept the strangely even tone. 'My sister was ill, dying, I thought. I could give her everything by this means. I did give her everything. She is better now, as well as she will ever be. She could not bear poverty; it was killing her. She never could. She is better.'

'But at what horrible, what hellish cost!' he replied. 'She was selfish always, and complaining; one of the useless ones; and moreover, answer me, does one buy a cracked pitcher, doomed to be broken at any rate, with the most exquisite pearl in the world, priceless above ten sultans' ransoms? Were it not so horrible it would be ridiculous. Does one, I ask you, do a thing like that?'

She turned to her husband.

'He says he believes the man you ask about was once engaged in a large coal-mining deal in the West.'

'Yes,' said the heavy man eagerly, leaning forward again to listen to what he could not understand, but with as keen attention as though he comprehended fully.

'Wait and I will ask him more.'

Again she turned to the other.

'But you, you also have bought unworthy things at fearful cost?'

'What? In God's name, what have I bought? I who renounced everything, who have nothing left in this world but the memory of your face and the certainty of death?'

'You bought for yourself the approval of what you may choose to call your conscience,' she said in the same almost monotonous, even voice. 'You bought freedom from the world's censure, freedom from what the world would have said had you married me.'

He flung out a trembling hand. I thought it would have betrayed him.

'That! Will you bring up that old mad folly of yours? Would you hope to persuade me it was not my duty to renounce you? They told me I could not possibly get well. You see for yourself. You see now how I am changed. I shall last now, perhaps, six months. You had nothing. I had nothing. What would have become of you, not to speak of all the horror? It was clearly my duty. I leave it to any man.'

'Yes; always that. The opinion of others,' she said, but even still without emotion. 'I do not care for the opinion of a worldful. I accept the fact that you could not get well. I tell you it does not matter. It was for each other God made us; without any regard to circumstance.'

'A woman's reason is not reason,' he said. 'Any man would tell you it was my duty to give you up. The world is not made as you would have it.'

'Listen,' she said. (She interrupted herself to glance with a smile at her husband, and said to him in English, 'I am trying to explain to him. He is a little dull. He does not understand.') 'Listen' — she spoke again to the other. 'Be reasonable. See it as it is. Do not cheat yourself into thinking this horrible failure of ours was a virtue. Review the facts with me and face them. These are they: we compromised with life, and in a cowardly fashion. I married, to buy my sister health, because I had not the courage to see her suffer. You renounced me and went away, so that you might have a certain peace of mind, and because you

had not the courage to go counter to tradition and the world's approval. What would the world have said — a man as ill as you were, to accept the life and devotion of a woman? It was that that tormented and swayed you. You left me, and went away to escape that. We both bought a certain worldly peace of mind, and a kind of conventional self-approval. And with what? With what did we buy these trifling things? What price did we pay for them? We bought them with the entire wealth and treasure God had given us — the most precious in his treasuries, beside which kings' ransoms are as nothing. We bought these trifles, these worthless baubles, with the priceless love we had for each other. He gave it to us in such ample measure, you remember. And what did we do with it? What have we to show for it now? In God's world are there to be found, do you think, two such spendthrifts?'

'There! It is your old way,' he replied. 'You speak always in figures, like a poet. It is misleading. Deal only with the facts. I leave them to any one. I was to die of a lingering illness. I had no money. I had only a wealth of horrors to drag you through. A slow death it was to be. You would have had two years of that.'

'Two years,' she repeated. 'I have been married eight months; and I think those eight months have been twice eight years. And two years, two years together, you and I! But oh, if it had been one year only; if we had had but one year together! Only one year!' There was a kind of pleading in her voice. 'Only one year! It is as if one were to say "only springtime" — "only love," — "only heaven," — "only God!" '

'What does he say?' said her husband. Perhaps he was curious at the tone of her voice; or merely impatient at the length of their conversation.

'Tell him anything,' said the other. 'We must converse

at any cost. Tell him anything you like; only do not cease to speak to me.'

She turned to her husband.

'He is quite interesting. He thinks he used to know this man when he was a child; that his father had some dealings with him in that very coal affair in Illinois. Let me question him a little more. I will tell you by and by. We must not seem to be too curious. Do not interrupt me; just let me lead him on. It may take a few moments.'

The other began now, without waiting for her to take up the conversation.

'But I tell you, you do not see the thing as it is. It would have been a criminal thing for a man doomed as I was, to link his life with a woman like you, frail, exquisite, young, beautiful, the very rose of the world. Is it permissible for a man to drag a woman with him to the scaffold, even for love? I leave it to any man.'

'Yes, to any man,' — her reply was quick on his, — 'but you dare not leave it to a woman. Any man would tell you it is not permissible that one about to die should lay his hand in that of the woman he loves. And any man would grant you, that if the woman is his wife, — if that tradition has bound them, — then it is his right and her duty that they should share fatality, even though they have not the high calling of love. If this man who is my husband were stricken, you, even you, would expect me —'

The sentence broke and she left it as though there could be no need of making the truth plainer. Instead, she folded her hands tensely.

'But, oh, let us not argue. We have squandered God's treasure, you and I. We have squandered it for the sake of convention, for old precedents, for men's opinions; just as this man, my husband, buys railway shares and mining properties at the fearful price of his honor, his human kind-

ness, his soul. You despise him and shrink from him. Truly, I cannot, except when he lays his hand upon me; for we are no better than he. That is the horrible part of it. We are all three spendthrifts, the three of us, here in this little space. But oh, what new folly! Only think of our spending these precious, precious moments in argument! Shall we never have done being wasteful!'

He fell in with her thought immediately.

'You love me still, then.'

'Yes, always.'

'Yet I have not the right, even now, to so much as touch your hand.'

'No; yet my hand lies in yours by the hour. These are things one cannot keep from God.'

'Do you know,' — his voice was even, — 'I cannot help wondering if the little girl over there in the corner just might possibly understand.'

'No; I think not,' she said gently; 'besides, if she did, it would not matter.'

'No, perhaps not. I think she would say nothing. I notice that her eyes are shaped somewhat like yours. Some day some man will love her also.'

'Yes, without doubt. But it is of ourselves I would talk. If there is a heaven, there, there, you shall some day possess me!'

Her husband broke in now: —

'Are you finding out anything?'

'Yes, quite a little!' She smiled palely, then turned back to the other.

'How can you lie to him like that?' he said. 'And I also.'

'We waste time,' she urged. 'A carriage meets us at the next town. From there he and I are to drive over to the adjoining county. You and I have only a few moments more left at the most in this world together.'

'Yes.' His fingers interlaced tightly, resting in his lap. 'Let us not argue any more. You remember the night by the river, O my beloved?'

'As though it were the only night in the world.'

'I remember that at first I dared not even be near you; I sat on the bank a little away from you,' he continued; 'but by and by the moon came up and all around us was stillness and beauty; the sheep slept in the pasture; the hills were all cool with the light of the moon; I have not forgotten; I can never forget — I dared just to lay the tips of my fingers on the hem of your gown. You did not notice that. It was as though I had dared lay my hand on the garment of God, but sweeter, sweeter even than that.'

'Oh yes, I saw. I saw and felt. And it was exactly as if by that token God had chosen me among women, as he chose the Virgin; only, he chose me there in the moonlight, not for glory and suffering as he chose her, but just for love. He chose and called me for that. I was to love you; was chosen by that touch to love you; only you, among a thousand; only you in all the world of many men. And then, just then, the nightingale, like some little feathered angel of annunciation, broke into song in the trees near by.'

'Yes; and to me it was as if white fire were all about you — as about some altar; and I was afraid to touch you. I dared not. You were too beautiful, too glorious. The night was too still, too holy. And then, at last, I reached out my hand and dared, as if one were to try a miracle. I laid it on yours. And still I lived. And then, the whole scenery of earth and heaven shifted, after that — as you know. You leaned and kissed me. Everything was changed forever.'

'Yes; I know. After that there was nothing but the night and the silence, and thou and I. Even the nightingale did not sing.'

'Yes.'

'And since that night there has been no one else in the world but only thou and I. Other people, do they not seem like shadows, myriads of shadows, like the inconsiderable leaves of a forest that shall fade and fall and be renewed — but only leaves and shadows?'

'Only thou and I,' he assented, 'in the wide forest, in the woods of the world. And soon, soon, soon, I shall walk the woods no more.'

'Since you must go, do not be discomfited,' she replied; 'nor trouble at all this. If as a kind of lasting torment, to match my own, you were permitted, after death, to be near, to see this man kiss and possess me, you have but to remember the night by the river in the moonlight. You are but to remember that this is the only night in the world; that there are no others; that the rest are dreams; that no lips but yours have ever really touched mine.' Her voice was beautiful, rich; a kind of farewell in itself. 'You must promise me this.'

Her husband leaned forward a little impatiently.

'We are nearly there. Can't you find out, Louise, what I want you to? The thing I want to know is whether he still has an interest in the coal lands. If he has it will be worth a good many thousands. Now do your best. Try.'

'But you must have patience,' she said, 'I am trying to find out something.'

'I cannot quite get it out of my head,' said the other, 'that we deserve to be damned for this. Does not your conscience misgive you?'

'No; rather my honor. I have a hatred of deception. It is the only time in my life that I have deceived. And you?'

'I might do penance.'

He smiled, I thought. He drew the cord of his habit

through his slim transparent fingers until one of the knots rested in his palms.

'You could not really mean anything so horrible! And your body, so slim, so beautiful, that I have loved!'

His voice, though it was low, rang also, now — quivered almost.

'You forget that the stripes might be sweet, my well-beloved,' — I could see that his lips trembled, — 'something still suffered for your sake.'

She put her hand to her brow, a little lovely gesture, as though all this troubled her, perhaps dazed her; or perhaps it was some old recollection in his voice.

'How absurd we are! We shall be parting soon.'

'Yes,' he said, 'for always. What can I say to you that you will remember?'

'Only say that you can never forget the night by the river.'

'I can never forget it.'

Something in his words fell final, like a fate.

She turned now to her husband. The stage was already slowing up.

'Is this the county seat? I have found out quite a great deal. I will tell you more about the coal lands as we drive. He is an interesting man.'

Suddenly, from having been intently upon them, my attention became aware of a familiar sound, the thudding hundred-hoofed sound of an approaching herd; I had been so absorbed in the strange world of the other happening that I had not known of their approach. Almost suddenly they were about us, black and brown backs, spreading horns, broad wet noses, massive foreheads.

The driver looked down through the little hole reassuringly.

'Just wait till they get past. They're on their way to the stockyards!'

We waited, the four of us, huddled together, with a strange kind of intimacy, it seemed, in the 'bus, while the trampling mass of driven dumb creatures surged and swayed around us, and finally struggled painfully by, each crowding the other, on their way to death. The woman watched them with eyes in which there met fear and pity.

With the last of the herd past, the driver was already opening the stage door. The woman's husband rose, stooping.

'If you'll allow me, I'll get out first with these.'

He took the satchels and got out of the 'bus, heavily.

He turned to assist the woman. She did not give him her hand at once. The Franciscan drew back a little to let her pass. She paused the fraction of a moment and gave her hand to him.

'Good-bye.'

When she was beside the large man on the road, he also offered his hand to the Franciscan.

'Thank you; thank you very much indeed.'

He turned. 'Guess that's our surrey over there, Louise.' The darkey driver of the surrey hurried toward him. 'Yes; take these.'

The woman followed him. She did not look back. He assisted her into the surrey and followed, himself, his weight bending it heavily to one side as he entered.

I saw them drive away, along a broad cross-road into the lovely rolling country, her brown veil floating a little, unknown to her, but like a living thing, with a little wild waving of its folds. The Franciscan I saw follow a road in another direction. The curve of it soon hid him. I did not see him again.

I remained in the 'bus. We were to stay only a little while at the county seat, for we were already late. New

horses were put to the pole, and within twenty minutes we were driving over the same road by which we had come.

An old gentleman who, I think, was a lawyer returning from county court, was the only other occupant, and he was soon dozing. It was a strange ride back. When we came to Latonia the light was so altered as to make a new and lovely adventure of it. The sun was not yet set, but the sunlight had withdrawn to the tops of the tall trees. Below, the hotel lawn was cool, almost twilit, mysterious in shadows. It was there only a little while ago that I had first seen these two coming down the path to enter the 'bus. The last few hours had changed life for me entirely. Though I did not know it at the time, I know now that the two worlds of reality and of romance — before that distinct and separate in my mind and all untried — were forever mingled with each other now, for me, and were one with my own life. I shall never henceforth be able to see a herd of cattle on a dusty road without seeing those two in their last meeting; nor shall I ever see any who remind me of him or her without a sense of love and death and the inevitable.

This is a true story. I have never told it before. I have kept it locked away as something too cherished, too intimate to share with any one. There always seemed to me a finality about it beyond any story I could ever read. Yet I am telling it now, partly from a sense of honor, partly from a hidden hope; because it was not, after all, finished that day. She may still be living. This may chance to meet her eye. If so, I would have her know that the dark-eyed child who rode with them that day came in time, by that strange chance, so much more strange in life than in any story, to meet just what she had met: to meet Love, the

glorious and radiant presence, only to find that there walked beside Love, — road-companions of the way, — Poverty, and one whose face had all the likeness of Death. And I would have her know that, because of that day, and because of the memory of her in my heart, so long cherished, I, at the chosen moment, laid my hand in that of the shining Presence, — despite those other presences, — to go with it, in what paths soever it might lead me.

It is so, I take it, life deals with us more largely than we know. Fools in our folly; spendthrifts though we may be, throwing priceless wisdom away to the winds, as these two had done; wasting our wealth and our substance of joy irretrievably; careless of God's treasure intrusted to us; squandering gold worth the ransom of all the kings of the earth, and this for some trifling thing, some inconsiderable bauble; yet God, unknown to us, does most usually, no doubt, save from our wrecked fortunes and our lost argosies something — something precious still, and above price — with which, at a future day, with merciful largesse of wisdom and of love, some other soul may yet be blest and may yet be enriched, as it were by all the treasure of the earth.

CHILDREN WANTED

BY LUCY PRATT

THEY were sitting at the breakfast table when the morning mail came in. There was something for Mr. Henry Tarbell — there was always something for him; there was something for Mrs. Henry Tarbell — there was usually something for her. The only thing at all unusual was that there was something for Master Crosby Tarbell. It was rather a strange-looking document, too. Beside the address was a picture of a pony with a long, sweeping tail, and just under the pony were some words. Crosby was learning to read in a school which was proud of its 'phonetic method,' and he read the words slowly, with many little lip sounds to help him on.

'Would you like a pony for your vacation? You can have her free.'

His father's glance fell on the picture.

'Hullo, where does all that come from?'

'It says I can have her free,' began Crosby, with a characteristic pause in the middle of his sentence, which always gave the effect of steadying the inclination to a slight tremble in his small, earnest voice; 'it says — I can have her free.' His face flushed. 'Can I — have her, father?'

'Where would you keep her?' inquired his father casually, opening a letter. 'In the kitchen?'

'No, in the — in the barn! They used to keep a horse there — before we lived here! I — I could keep her in the barn!'

'M — m, barn? I'm afraid she would n't recognize it.'

'But there's a stall there! A nice stall! *Could n't* I have her?'

His father looked up again.

'What's this? A prize contest? Oh, I see.' He smiled absently as he went on with his mail. 'Yes, it's safe to say you can have her — if you can get her.'

Crosby's face flushed slowly again, and his eyes looked very bright.

'If you can get her,' repeated his father, pushing his chair back and looking at his watch; 'but you can't, Crosby. There is n't a chance in a thousand that you could.' He put his watch in his pocket and looked at his wife. 'Well, I must go. Come on, old man. Better take your pony correspondence outside! Too good a day for the house.'

From the low porch-steps Crosby waved an absent good-bye, his eyes still on the pictured pony. As he tore away some yellow seals, a letter fell out, and he creased the big folder again and cautiously sat down on it so that it would not blow away. Then he spread the letter across his knees.

It was more than half an hour later that he looked up and drew a long breath of relief. It was the first really full-sized breath that he had taken since he began the letter — and he had just finished it. His eyes dwelt on the last sentences again, and as he pulled the folder from under him, they traveled back to the beginning.

'I have some good news for you!' It read more easily this time. 'What would make you happier than anything else you can think of? To have me tell you that you can have a pony of *your own?*' The characteristic, slow flush came into his cheeks. 'Well, that is just what I *am* going to tell you! Because on the twentieth of August we are going to give away to some boy or girl, one of the prettiest little Indian ponies you ever saw. Her name is "Lightfoot," and *you can have her if you get started right away.* The thing is to start right out —'

Oh, he understood the rest perfectly! He was simply to get subscriptions for *the most delicious breakfast food that had ever been boxed for the public market!* Its name? Buttercup Crisps! He was simply to get the names of people who were willing to put their names down for one order or more of Buttercup Crisps!

'Buttercup Crisps!' he whispered, and caught another deep breath at the mere sound of it, as he opened up the big folder. '*A Prize for Every Contestant!*' It stared at him in huge letters, and his eyes traveled swiftly from the shining bicycle to the little mahogany writing-desk, to the violin, to the beautiful gold watch — then rested again gently, lingeringly, on THE PONY. Just once again his glance shifted to the sentence which seemed to shine out from all the others. '*Her name is "Lightfoot," and you can have her if you get started right away.*'

He gathered up all his papers and went in.

'Mother —' he began; but he found that he needed a steadying pause at the very beginning. 'Mother — can I go out — for a little while? I want to — do something.'

She looked at the folded sheets in his hand.

'O Crosby, that's so foolish!' she protested. 'You know you could n't get that pony, no matter how hard you tried.'

'Well, can I go?' he repeated, sticking characteristically to the original question.

'Oh, yes, I suppose so. But I would n't waste my time over *that*, if I were you. It's too warm a day.'

He was already storing all the papers and pictures inside his waist for safe keeping, and as he marched steadily down town toward 'the centre,' he kept one hand of protection upon them and made out a careful plan of campaign. He must go to every house in town, beginning with the one right there, next the post-office. But it was n't a house. It was a store. Never mind, he would begin with the

store. He felt very strange, though, as he stood before the counter, while the man behind it waited, flirting some string which hung down from a suspended ball, and evidently quite ready for business.

'Would you like,' began Crosby, his voice growing so faint that he had to swallow to get it back again; 'would you like — some Buttercup Crisps?'

'Like some *what?*' bawled the man.

Crosby had an idea that he might get arrested if he asked that again, at least if he did n't make some variation, so he launched desperately into another construction.

'It's something — to eat! For breakfast! Buttercup Crisps! It comes — in boxes.'

'Well, what about it?' questioned the man behind the counter distractedly.

'I — do you — do you want some?' continued Crosby bravely.

'No, I don't,' declared the man behind the counter with both strength and finality. ' 'T would n't make any difference *what* it came in! I'm so overrun now with these breakfast concoctions that there ain't room left for anything else!'

'Yes, sir,' returned Crosby politely, and walked out to the street again.

It was not a very promising beginning, to be sure, but it was a relief to have that first dreadful plunge over. Perhaps it would n't be so bad after that. And he marched on to the next house, which *was* a house and not a store. A middle-aged colored woman, in an ample white apron, came to the door and stood smiling at him while he screwed his courage into words again.

'Would you like — would you like — to try a few Buttercup Crisps?' he asked, with a fleeting consciousness that he had made a really elegant effort.

'W'at's dat, chile?' inquired the woman of color in kindly tones.

'Buttercup Crisps!' stammered Crosby. '*Crisps!* A few — '

'One o' dese yere breakfus' fancies, I s'pose?' came the kindly encouragement. 'An' it soun' good, too, doan't it? But' — she lowered her voice to a note of confidential intimacy — 'dey doan't 'low me ter transac' no business at de do', chile, no matter *w'at* yer offers. Dey would n't trus' it!'

'Yes'm,' returned Crosby faintly, and walked down the steps.

It made him positively dizzy to think of asking that question again. But his hand rose mechanically to the folded papers under his waist, and once more a vision of a beautiful, long-tailed pony swept before his eyes.

'It said I could have her if I got started right away,' he reasoned steadily, 'and I have got started right away, so I — I guess I better keep right on.'

He looked so hot and tired when he came in to dinner, that his mother glanced at him questioningly.

'Why, Crosby, where *have* you been? You look perfectly roasted. Is is so hot in the sun? Well, don't go out again this afternoon until it's cooler.'

'I'm not — so very hot,' he assured her.

But he thought, himself, that he would n't go out again right away. He had been to a good many houses that morning, but for some reason he had not a real name to show for it. He had not seen the right people! Most of them had been servants, and of course they could n't have bought Buttercup Crisps — if they had wanted to. No — he must begin asking for 'the lady of the house.' And he must become more familiar with the literature of his folder. Its advertising value was his chief asset.

He set forth the next morning with new hope and confidence. And something very exhilarating soon happened. The very first 'lady of the house' who smiled down at him from her doorway, as he explained with conscientious, steadying pauses, the full meaning of his call, and then, pointing to the pictured pony, explained, with even longer steadying pauses, that he wanted to get her for a prize — why, that very first generous lady decided that she would give him her name for six boxes of Buttercup Crisps! Crosby fairly tottered with the monstrous significance of it. But as he drew more papers out from under his waist and found the page where subscribers' names were to be written, she glanced it hastily over.

'Yes, now I am to give you seventy-five cents,' she explained kindly, as she wrote her name, 'and it tells you in this little notice here that that counts you one point. It says, too, I see, that it takes six points to become a contestant.'

'Everybody gets a prize,' explained Crosby; and he unfolded the beautiful folder again with its large and frequent letters of assurance still staring joyously.

'Yes, but —' She looked down at his small, upturned face, and flushed with a kind of helpless shame, — 'but don't you see, dear child — it tells you here, in fine print, that it takes *six points* to become a contestant?'

Crosby looked puzzled. 'Every contestant gets — a prize,' he repeated slowly. 'Does that mean that if you work — and get names — that perhaps you won't get a prize either?'

'That's just what it means, and I would n't bother with it if I were you. You see it means so much work for you — and it's so uncertain.'

'But the letter — was written to me,' explained Crosby. 'And the Pony Man says — I can't lose!'

'Well, then he's saying what is n't so. Because you can lose very easily, and I'm very much afraid that you will. But if you want to keep trying,' — she just touched his cheek with her hands, — 'I — I hope that you will be successful!'

He went down the steps with a troubled face, tying three silver quarters into the corner of his handkerchief. So he did not yet understand all those printed documents! He looked up and down the warm, tree-lined street, and sat down under the first tree, spreading them all carefully out upon the grass. When he got up and started on again, he still looked troubled, but there was, too, a look of patient determination about him — entirely characteristic. He understood it all now. He understood about the points.

At dinner-time his eyes looked very bright. He had six names on his list for varying and assorted orders of Buttercup Crisps! As he brought out all his money and showed it to his mother, she smiled at him and told him that he was wasting his time. But he looked back at her with bright, confident eyes, as he went out again, his precious papers still buttoned under his waist.

As his campaign went on with steadily growing success, he trudged off as regularly as possible every morning, back again at noon and again at night. His mother listened and smiled at explanations of wonderful progress, at the growing list of names, and occasionally his father half listened, and smiled too.

After perhaps three weeks of it, there came a day when Crosby's most confident hope, at all times unwavering, became a thing which seemed to soar away with him into a kind of pony heaven, where he heard only the word 'Lightfoot,' and saw only one beautiful animal with a long, sweeping tail, because it kept flashing so continuously before his eyes. That was the day when he was obliged to send for a

new subscription blank. That was the day when his hope, if it had ever in the past wavered even unconsciously, became a thing of absolute fixedness. And when there were seven new names on the new blank, and his little bag of money was so fat and heavy that he doubted whether it would hold any more, anyway, he had a conference with his mother about dates, and decided that it was time — it was the *day* to send everything — all the returns — to the Pony Man.

She helped him, with the same smile of forbearance, about the money-order, made out with such dashing effect by the man at the post-office, and together they got off an impressive-looking envelope full of impressive-looking matter. It gave just the last touch of safety and surety to it all to have his mother helping, and Crosby looked up at her with shining eyes.

'You can ride in the pony-cart, — after the pony comes, — can't you?'

It took longer pauses than usual to keep things steady that time, and her glance wandered to his bright eyes.

'Would you be very much disappointed if it did n't come?'

A puzzled reproach crept over his face. She felt guilty of an unwarrantable suspiciousness of nature as he looked back at her — and then hurried off to the old stall in the barn. It seemed so strange not to have to think about names any more. He could give all his time to the barn now. He wished that it was a nicer one, but with a little well-spent labor he thought he might make it very presentable, after all.

It was the next morning, after he had been working there with a fixed, concentrated pucker between his eyes for almost three hours, that a small boy from the next house appeared.

'Say, Crosby,' he began, 'there 's a lady lives up there on the hill road — you know, after you've crossed the long bridge and turned up on the hill road?' Crosby nodded. 'Well, there's a lady lives up there says she'll be glad to help you. You know, for the pony you're trying to get. I was telling her about it yesterday, and she said she did n't know anything about the breakfast food, but she'd be glad to help you just the same.'

'But I've sent the names already,' explained Crosby, looking perplexed with fortune's almost immoderate favors.

'Well, send hers alone. Can't you do that?'

Crosby meditated. 'What house did you say she lived in?'

'It's the only house up there on the hill road. You know! The big, white house. You could n't miss it.'

'I guess I better go up there then.'

He glanced out to the street, where the sun simmered on the white, hot road, and wiped some little beads of perspiration from his forehead. Then he walked slowly out through the yard.

When, what seemed a long time afterwards, he dragged himself in from the simmering, white street again, his legs pulling listlessly behind him, he even forgot, for the time being, what the walk had all been about, and sat down vacantly on the cool step in the shade, his cheeks burning a deep, dull red. Then he remembered and pulled himself up again. And that evening another letter started on its way to the Pony Man.

The next morning he waked up with a confused consciousness that something important was hanging over him. Gradually it came back quite clearly. It was the twentieth. And then, for the first time, he became aware of facing a quite unheralded question of challenge. *Was there*

any doubt about the pony's coming? His long list of subscription names flashed before his eyes, his big, shining pile of money, his mother's smile, the post-office man's 'whew!' of admiration before he made out the money-order, the promises in the letter if he began 'right away' and worked — and he had worked all the time ever since! There was but one possible answer to that question. The pony would come — to-day — before night.

He stumbled gayly down the stairs as he thought of all that he was going to do that morning in the barn. It was such a strange, rickety little affair, that barn; it did seem to look so much more like a shed than anything else, that he was continually haunted by his father's words: 'Barn? I'm afraid she would n't recognize it.' But he could make it clean, anyway, if it was n't new. He looked up at the battered manger, from his kneeling position on the floor, as he scrubbed with soap and water, and wondered what he could do about that. Something he was sure. Why, there were plenty of ways to do things if you only had sense. He thought he must be mistaken when he heard his mother calling him to dinner; but then, when he stopped and looked around, he felt a tired glow of satisfaction. The walls and floor of the old stall had not changed color, as he had hoped they would by washing, but they looked damp, and clean, too. Across the battered front of the manger was tacked a shining but crooked piece of clean, brown paper, and inside was a fresh little pile of grass and three large, round gingercakes beside it. But Crosby's eyes traveled most lovingly to a small row of implements which hung down from the wall, at one side, from nails which he had pounded in. Of course ponies had to be groomed, and he looked up proudly at the small, clean brush, hanging by a string and suggestive no longer of the sink; at the worn whisk-broom next; at the broken comb; and finally at a little, shrunken last

winter's glove, with its fingers cut off evenly, which completed the line. He would wear that glove when he did his daily grooming.

'I'll finish everything after dinner,' he meditated, and went in.

When he came back, a saucer of milk trembled dangerously in one hand, and with a faint, half-conscious smile flickering about his mouth, he put it down on the floor in the corner.

'She 'll be thirsty when she gets here,' he reasoned; and then, half apologetically, he glanced down at a big, loose bunch of summer goldenrod, supported by the other hand. Standing high on his toes, he propped it very jauntily over a time-worn beam just opposite the door. 'To look nice when she comes in,' he whispered; and then he cast round a final look, sighed a tired sigh of satisfaction — and went out and closed the door.

He wandered about restlessly that afternoon, and finally, with a queer, light feeling in his head, that he associated dimly with the long walk on the hill road the day before, he turned out of the yard and struck off across the street in the direction of the railroad station. He wanted to inquire about trains and the station was near. Besides, he knew the station-master, and he would tell him just what he wanted to know.

To be sure! The station-master was both alert and intelligent.

'A pony from New York?' he echoed. 'You're expecting a pony from New York? Well, now I hope you are n't going to be disappointed about it! You say it was to leave New York to-day? Well, there 's a New York-Boston train that gets in here at half-past six. That 's the last one there is. So if there 's any pony coming, she 'll be on

that train, won't she? Yes, if she 's coming at all, she 'll be on that train.'

'Half-past six? What time is it — now?' questioned Crosby.

'It's just half-past four. Now, you don't want to hang round here for two hours. No, you run home and make yourself easy. I pass your place on my way home to supper, and if you're outside I'll let you know whether there's anything for you. But I would n't get my hopes up too high.'

Crosby looked up gratefully. He had not even heard the last sentence. He was already making his way out of the station and back home again, wondering just how he could spend all that time.

Two hours later, his father came swinging up the walk. Crosby, sitting on the grass close to the sidewalk, hardly saw him. He thought he saw some one else — away down the walk — moving slowly towards him.

'Hullo, Crosby,' began his father cheerfully. 'What you doing? Looking at the view?'

Crosby smiled faintly, but his eyes were straining away down the walk.

'You look pale, son; what's the matter? You'd better come in to supper.'

'No, it is n't going to be ready — quite yet, mother said.'

His father gave him another questioning look and went on into the house.

'What's the matter with Crosby?' he asked inside. 'He looks as if he'd been frightened half to death.'

'Oh, he's worrying himself to pieces about that pony. He's been fussing round in the barn all day long. He really thinks he 's going to get it, I suppose.'

'Pony? What pony? Has he been working himself to death over *that* business? What's he been doing in the barn?'

He walked through the house and down the back steps and crossed the yard. Then he opened the door which led directly into the old stall and stopped.

'Oh, Lord above us!' he whispered.

Never, since he was a child, a child like the one who had just looked up at him from the grass, had such an overmastering desire swept over him to sit down, right where he was, and drop his head down into his hands — and cry.

'Oh, Lord above us!' he whispered again faintly, pushing his hand up to his eyes.

It was all just as it had been left, the old walls and floor with great splinters scoured out of them everywhere; the manger with its shining, crooked front of clean, brown paper; the little hanging row of grooming implements: the small brush, the worn whisk-broom, the comb, the little old glove, the pile of grass in the manger, and the three gingercakes, the saucer of milk in the corner — and the jaunty bunch of goldenrod nodding down upon it all from the beam just opposite the door.

He pushed his hands blindly to his eyes again; then he went out, closed the door, and walked down the yard where Crosby was sitting — no, he was standing, standing and looking dumbly after a man who was walking away and blowing his nose.

'Crosby,' began his father huskily, 'Crosby, — come into the house, come in to supper, — I want to see you.'

Crosby looked up with dry, hunted-looking eyes, and his chin trembled just perceptibly.

'I'm coming — in just a minute,' he began, with a quivering appeal in the dry, hunted eyes to be left — to be left alone — just for a minute!

His father turned and went up the steps, while Crosby's gaze shifted mechanically back to the man who was going on up the street. But he turned, too, slowly, and crossed

the yard to the barn and opened the door and went in. He hoped no one had seen it, and he pulled off the brown paper from the manger and wrapped it round the pile of gingercakes. Then he reached up for the little row of grooming implements and took them down one by one.

When Crosby was three, he had tumbled down on a brick walk one day, and had sat up winking vaguely while drops of blood ran down his face — and tried to smile at his mother. It had never been just natural for Crosby to cry when he was hurt; but as he came slowly back into the old stall and stooped down to take up the saucer of milk, something dropped with a splashing sound into the milk, making rings away out to the edge. He raised his arm and dragged his hand across his eyes, and then he reached up for the jaunty bunch of flowers on the beam. But that strange, light feeling in his head, dimly associated with the hill road, seemed to confuse him again — and he could not just remember what he was going to do next. As he pushed open the door, he tripped over some scattered goldenrod, and then went stumbling along to the house.

'He said — I could have her — if I got started right off — he said — I could have her — if I got started right off — he said — he said — he said I could have her — if I got started —'

His mother met him at the door.

'Come in — Crosby —' she began brokenly, 'come in —'

'He said — *I could have her — if I got started right off!*' he shrieked out in a high, quivering, babyish wail, 'and — I *did* — get started — right — off —'

'Hush — hush! You have worked — so hard! You are so tired!' She looked, with frightened eyes, at his dully burning cheeks.

'Take him up to bed — let me take him up,' came a

husky voice behind them; and he was lifted in his father's arms and carried upstairs.

As they undid the straining buttons of the well-filled little waist, some papers dropped down to the floor and the man stooped and picked them up. He looked at them and put them in his pocket.

'I'm going to call up the doctor,' he whispered.

But after the doctor had come and gone, he went upstairs again and sat down by the bed, while his shocked eyes sought the small, still upturned face. It was so characteristic of the boy that, in a high fever, he should not chatter in delirium, that he should not scream wild things about a pony, that he should only lie there quietly, with his eyes closed and his face turned upwards. For a long time the watcher by the bed looked down in the flickering half-light, and then he went downstairs to his study and shut the door. When he had read the papers, which he took from his pocket, from beginning to end, he placed a clean sheet sharply on the desk before him, and with his mouth closed into a taut, straight line which relaxed into no curve of compromise as his pen marched down the sheet, Mr. Henry Tarbell wrote a letter to the Pony Man.

He sealed and directed it — and walked out of the house, with long strides, to the post-box.

It was many days later that he hung over the bed where a child lay tired out with fever, and gently said something that he thought might bring a little light back into the white face.

'They did send you a prize, Crosby, after all! A first-class little prize that has just come this morning! Look!' And he held up a small but crisply ticking watch upon a cheaply shining chain.

Crosby reached up his hand. 'I don't believe — it would keep the — right time — would it?' he asked slowly, with a

suspiciousness quite new. And his unwavering eyes sought his father's.

'*Why* did they — write such a — lie to me — about the pony?' he challenged faintly.

'Forget it, boy!' returned his father gayly. 'We'll have a pony yet! We 'll have to have one to get the color back into your face, I 'm thinking! Say, sonny, I 'm glad you got the old stall fixed up for it, are n't you?'

The unwavering eyes were still upon his father, and the first entirely unresisted tears that any one had ever seen in them since he stepped out of his baby's dresses and marched forth to life, with brave but unaccustomed feet, and steadying pauses, slipped quietly down the white cheeks.

'*You* — *you* would n't — talk that way — unless you meant it!' whispered Crosby.

THE SQUIRE

BY ELSIE SINGMASTER

THE squire was a bachelor, and lived alone in his house; therefore he was able to use the parlor and dining-room for offices. The parlor contained only a pine desk, a map, hanging 'at' the wall, as Millerstown would have said, and a dozen or so plain pine chairs. The law was administered with scant ceremony in Millerstown.

The squire sat now in the twilight in his 'back' office, which was furnished with another pine table, two chairs, and a large old-fashioned iron safe. He was clearly of a geographical turn of mind, for table, safe, and floor were littered with railroad maps and folders. The squire was about sixty years old; he had all the grave beauty which the Gaumer men acquired. Their hair did not thin as it turned gray, their smooth-shaven faces did not wrinkle. They all looked stern, but their faces brightened readily at sight of a little child or an old friend, or with amusement over some untold thought.

The squire's face glowed. He was going — his age, his inexperience, the certain disapproval of Millerstown notwithstanding — he was going round the world! He would start in a month, and thus far he had told no one but Edwin Seem, an adventurous young Millerstonian who was to leave that night for a ranch in Kansas, and whom the squire was to visit on his own journey. For thirty years he had kept Millerstown straight; there was no possible case for which his substitute would not find a precedent. Fortunately there were no trusts to be investigated and reproved, and no vote-buyers or bribers to be imprisoned or

fined. There were disputes of all kinds, dozens of them, There was one waiting for the squire now in the outer office; he shook his head solemnly at thought of it, as he gathered up his maps and thrust them back into the safe, that precious old safe which held the money for his journey. He had been thirty years gathering the money together.

The law might be administered in Millerstown without formality, but it was not administered without the eager attention of the citizens. Every one in the village was on hand when simple-minded Venus Stuber was indicted for stealing, or when the various dramatic scenes of the Miller-Weitzel feud were enacted. This evening's case, Sula Myers *vs.* Adam Myers for non-support, might be considered part of the Miller-Weitzel feud, since the two real principals, Sula's mother and Adam's mother, had been respectively Sally Miller and Maria Weitzel.

The air was sultry, and rain threatened. The clouds seemed to rest on the tops of the maple trees; it was only because the Millerstonians knew the rough brick pavements as they knew the palms of their hands that there were no serious falls in the darkness. They laughed as they hurried to the hearing: it was seldom that a dispute promised so richly. There was almost no one in the village who could not have been subpœnaed as a witness, so thorough was every one's knowledge of the case.

Already the real principals faced each other, glaring, under the blinding light of the squire's hanging lamp. It made no difference that Millerstown listened and chuckled or that the squire had taken his seat behind the pine desk.

'When it don't give any religion, it don't give any decent behaving. But God trieth the hearts of the righteous,' said Mrs. Myers meaningly.

She was a large, commanding woman, who had been converted in middle life to the fervent sect of the new Men-

nonites, and young Adam had been brought up in that persuasion. Except for his marriage, young Adam had been thus far his mother's creature, body and soul.

Sula's mother, Mrs. Hill, was large also. She took off her sunbonnet, and folded her arms as tightly as possible across her broad bosom.

'There is sometimes too much religion,' she said.

'Not in your family, Sally,' rejoined Mrs. Myers, her glance including not only Mrs. Hill and Sula, but all their sympathizers, and even Caleb Stemmel, who was supposed to be neutral.

Caleb Stemmel belonged in the same generation with the squire; his interest could be only general. Caleb did not see Mrs. Myers's scornful glance; he was watching pretty Sula, who sat close by her mother's side.

Sula looked at nobody, neither at her angry mother beside her, nor at her angry mother-in-law opposite, nor even at Adam her husband, sitting close by his mother. She wore her best clothes, her pretty summer hat, the white dress in which she had been married a year before. Even her wedding handkerchief was tucked into her belt.

Sula had been strangely excited when she dressed in the bedroom of her girlhood for the hearing. There was the prospect of getting even with her mother-in-law, with whom she had lived for a year and whom she hated; there was the prospect of seeing Adam's embarrassment; there was another reason, soothing to her pride, and as yet almost unacknowledged, even to herself.

Now, however, the glow had begun to fade, and she felt uncomfortable and distressed. She heard only dimly Mrs. Myers's attack and her mother's response. Immediately Mrs. Myers told Mrs. Hill to be quiet, and Mrs. Hill replied with equal elegance.

'You will both be quiet,' said the squire sternly. 'The

court will come to order. Now, Sula, you are the one that complains; you will tell us what you want.'

Sula did not answer; she was tugging at her handkerchief. The handkerchief had been pinned fast, its loosening took time.

'It was this way,' began Mrs. Myers and Mrs. Hill, together.

The squire lifted his hand. 'We will wait for Sula.' He looked sternly at Mrs. Hill. 'No whispering, Sally!'

Sula's complaint came out with a burst of tears.

'He won't support me. For three months already I did n't have a cent.'

'All this time I supported her,' said her mother.

'She had a good home and would n't stay in it,' said Mrs. Myers.

The squire commanded silence again.

'Sula, you were willing to live with Adam's mother when you were married. Why are n't you now?'

'She — she would n't give me no peace. She would n't let him take me for a wedding-trip, not even to the Fair.' She repeated it as though it were the worst of all her grievances: 'Not even a wedding-trip to the Fair would he dare to take.'

Mrs. Hill burst forth again. She would have spoken if decapitation had followed.

'He gave all his money to his mom.'

'He is yet under age,' said Mrs. Myers.

Again Mrs. Hill burst forth: —

'She wanted that Sula should convert herself to the Mennonites.'

'I wanted to save her soul,' declared Mrs. Myers.

'You need n't to worry yourself about her soul,' answered Mrs. Hill. 'When you behave as well as Sula when you 're young, you need n't to worry yourself about other people's souls when you get old.'

Mrs. Myers's youth had not been as strait-laced as her middle age; there was a depth of reminiscent innuendo in Mrs. Hill's remark. Millerstown laughed. It was one of the delights of these hearings that no allusion failed to be appreciated.

'Besides, I did give her money,' Mrs. Myers hastened to say.

'Yes; five cents once in a while, and I had to ask for it every time,' said Sula. 'I might as well stayed at home with my mom as get married like that.' Sula's eyes wandered about the room, and suddenly her face brightened. Her voice hardened as though some one had waved her an encouraging sign. 'I want him to support me right. I must have four dollars a week. I can't live off my mom.'

The squire turned for the first time to the defendant.

'Well, Adam, what have you to say?'

Adam had not glanced toward his wife. He sat with bent head, staring at the floor, his face crimson. He was a slender fellow, he looked even younger than his nineteen years.

'I did my best,' he said miserably.

'Can't you make a home for her alone, Adam?'

'No.'

'How much do you earn?'

'About seven dollars a week. Sometimes ten.'

'Other people in Millerstown live on that.'

'But I have nothing to start, no furniture or anything.'

'Your mother will surely give you something, and Sula's mother.' The squire looked commandingly at Mrs. Myers and Mrs. Hill. 'It is better for young ones to begin alone.'

'I have nothing to spare,' said Mrs. Myers stiffly.

'I would n't take any of your things,' blazed Sula. 'I would n't use any of your things, or have any of your things.'

'You knew how much he had when you married him,'

said Mrs. Myers calmly. 'You need n't have run after him.'

'Run after him!' cried Sula.

It was the climax of sordid insult. They had been two irresponsible children mating as birds mate, with no thought for the future. It was not true that she had run after him. She burst into loud crying.

'If you and your son begged me on your knees to come back, I would n't.'

'Run after him!' echoed Sula's mother. 'I had almost to take the broom to him at ten o'clock to get him to go home!'

Adam looked up quickly. For the moment he was a man. He spoke as hotly as his mother; his warmth startled even his pretty wife.

'It is n't true; she — never ran after me.'

He looked down again; he could not quarrel, he had heard nothing but quarreling for months. It made no difference to him what happened. A plan was slowly forming in his mind. Edwin Seem was going West; he would go too, away from mother and wife alike.

'She can come and live in the home I can give her or she can stay away,' he said sullenly, knowing that Sula would never enter his mother's house.

The squire turned to Sula once more. He had been staring at the back of the room, where Cabel Stemmel's keen, selfish face moved now into the light, now back into the shadow. On it was a strange expression, a hungry gleam of the eyes, a tightening of the lips, an eager watching of the girlish figure in the white dress. The squire knew all the gossip of Millerstown, and he knew many things which Millerstown did not know. He had known Caleb Stemmel for fifty years. But it was incredible that Caleb Stemmel with all his wickedness should have any hand in this.

The squire bent forward.

'Sula, look at me. You are Adam's wife. You must live with him. Won't you go back?'

Sula looked about the room once more. Sula would do nothing wrong — yet. It was with Caleb Stemmel that her mother advised, it was Caleb Stemmel who came evening after evening to sit on the porch. Caleb Stemmel was a rich man even if he was old enough to be her father, and it was many months since any one else had told Sula that her hat was pretty or her dress becoming.

Now, with Caleb's eyes upon her, she said the little speech which had been taught her, the speech which set Millerstown gasping, and sent the squire leaping to his feet, furious anger on his face. Neither Millerstown nor the squire, English as they had become, was yet entirely of the world.

'I will not go back,' said pretty Sula lightly. 'If he wants to apply for a divorce, he can.'

'Sula!' cried the squire.

He looked about once more. On the faces of Sula's mother and Caleb Stemmel was complacency, on the face of Mrs. Myers astonished approval, on the faces of the citizens of Millerstown — except the very oldest — there was amazement, but no dismay. There had never been a divorce in Millerstown; persons quarreled, sometimes they separated, sometimes they lived in the same house without speaking to each other for months and years, but they were not divorced. Was this the beginning of a new order?

If there were to be a new order, it would not come during the two months before the squire started on his long journey! He shook his fist, his eyes blazing.

'There is to be no such threatening in this court,' he cried; 'and no talking about divorce while I am here. Sula! Maria! Sally! Are you out of your heads?'

'There are higher courts,' said Mrs. Hill.

Millerstown gasped visibly at her defiance. To its further amazement, the squire made no direct reply. Instead he went toward the door of the back office.

'Adam,' he commanded, 'come here.'

Adam rose without a word, to obey. He had some respect for the majesty of the law.

'Sula, you come, too.'

For an instant Sula held back.

'Don't you do it, Sula,' said her mother.

'Sula!' said the squire; and Sula, too, rose.

'Don't you give up,' commanded her mother. Then she got to her feet. 'I'm going in there, too.'

Again the squire did not answer. He presented instead the effectual response of a closed and locked door.

The back office was as dark as a pocket. The squire took a match from the safe, and lit the lamp. Behind them the voices of Mrs. Myers and Mrs. Hill answered each other with antiphonal regularity. Adam stood by the window; Sula advanced no farther than the door. The squire spoke sharply.

'Adam!'

Adam turned from the window.

'Sula!'

Sula looked up. She had always held the squire in awe; now, without the support of her mother's elbow and Caleb Stemmel's eyes, she was badly frightened. Moreover, it seemed to her suddenly that the thing she had said was monstrous. The squire frightened her no further. He was now gentleness itself.

'Sula,' he said, 'you did n't mean what you said in there, did you?'

Sula burst into tears, not of anger but of wretchedness.

'You 'd say anything, too, if you had to stand the things I did.'

'Sit down, both of you,' commanded the squire. 'Now, Adam, what are you going to do?'

Adam hid his face in his hands. The other room had been a torture-chamber. 'I don't know.' Then, at the squire's next question, he lifted his head suddenly. It seemed as if the squire had read his soul.

'When is Edwin Seem going West?'

'To-night.'

'How would you like to go with him?'

'He wanted me to. He could get me a place with good wages. But I could n't save even the fare in half a year.'

'Suppose,' — the squire hesitated, then stopped, then went on again, — 'suppose I should give you the money?'

'Give me the money!'

'Yes, lend it to you?'

A red glow came into Adam's face. 'I would go to-night.'

'And Sula?' said the squire.

'I would —' The boy was young, too young to have learned despair from only one bitter experience. Besides, he had not seen Caleb Stemmel's eyes. 'I would send for her when I could.'

The squire made a rapid reckoning. He did not dare to send the boy away with less than a hundred dollars, and it would take a long while to replace it. He could not, *could not* send Sula, too, no matter how much he hated divorce, no matter how much he feared Caleb Stemmel's influence over her, no matter how much he loved Millerstown and every man, woman, and child in it. If he sent Sula, it would mean that he might never start on his own journey. He looked down at her, as she sat drooping in her chair.

'What do you say, Sula?'

Sula looked up at him. It might have been the thought of parting which terrified her, or the recollection of Caleb Stemmel.

'Oh, I would try,' she said faintly; 'I would try to do what is right. But they are after me all the time — and — and —' Her voice failed, and she began to cry.

The squire swung open the door of the old safe.

'You have ten minutes to catch the train,' he said gruffly. 'You must hurry.'

Adam laid a shaking hand on the girl's shoulder. It was the first time he had been near her for weeks.

'Sula,' he began wretchedly.

The squire straightened up. He had pulled out from the safe a roll of bills. With it came a mass of brightly colored pamphlets which drifted about on the floor.

'Here,' he said, 'I mean both of you, of course.'

'I am to go, too?' cried Sula.

'Of course,' said the squire. 'Edwin will look after you.'

'In this dress?' said Sula.

'Yes, now run.'

For at least ten minutes more the eager company in the next room heard the squire's voice go on angrily. Each mother was complacently certain that he was having no effect on her child.

'He is telling her she ought to be ashamed of herself,' said Mrs. Myers.

'He is telling him he is such a mother-baby,' responded Mrs. Hill. 'She will not go back to him while the world stands.'

'The righteous shall be justified, and the wicked shall be condemned,' said Mrs. Myers.

Suddenly the squire's monologue ended with a louder burst of oratory. The silence which followed frightened Mrs. Hill.

'Let me in!' she demanded, rapping on the door.

'This court shall be public, not private,' cried Mrs. Myers.

She thrust Mrs. Hill aside and knocked more loudly, at which imperative summons the squire appeared. He stood for an instant with his back to the door, the bright light shining on his handsome face. Seeing him appear alone, the two women stood still and stared.

'Where is he?' asked Mrs. Myers.

'Where is she?' demanded Mrs. Hill.

The squire's voice shook.

'There is to be no divorcing in Millerstown yet awhile,' he announced.

'Where is he?' cried Mrs. Myers.

'Where is she?' shrieked Mrs. Hill.

The squire smiled. The parting blast of the train whistle, screaming as if in triumph, echoed across the little town. They had had abundance of time to get aboard.

'He is with her, where he should be,' he answered Mrs. Myers, 'and she is with him, where she should be,' he said to Mrs. Hill, 'and both are together.' This time it seemed that he was addressing all of Millerstown. In reality he was looking straight at Caleb Stemmel.

'You m-m-mean that —' stammered Mrs. Myers.

'What *do* you mean?' demanded Mrs. Hill.

'I mean,' — and now the squire was grinning broadly, — 'I mean they are taking a wedding-trip.'

GREGORY AND THE SCUTTLE

BY CHARLES HASKINS TOWNSEND

This is a tale of the warm sea-tides that daily and nightly flood the channels among the Bermuda Islands. I had almost written it 'The Scuttle and Gregory,' but it was Gregory who carried on the campaign aggressively and finally triumphed with the trap-net, so that the sea-monster was dragged away into captivity.

At our first meeting, when I described the creature whose subjection I wished to accomplish, Gregory said, 'That's the scuttle.' I suggested the word cuttle, as, perhaps, more appropriate, but it was not appreciated. The scuttle by any other name could never be satisfactory to him. Quibbling over a mere title seemed unnecessary, so I made an effort to get down to essentials and adopted Gregory's word. As a result of our conference, Gregory took certain implements of capture and sailed out of the bay; only to return, after a considerable absence, with an empty boat.

He had, however, matured certain plans which it seemed reasonable to follow out. It appeared that a combination of forces was desirable, so I contracted for the services of both Gregory and his boat, and we set about the circumvention of the scuttle by fair measure or foul.

As we sailed away in the light morning breeze, Gregory expatiated upon the subtlety of the scuttle and the labors of the black toilers of the sea, who had sought to capture him.

'How big is he?' I inquired.

'Not too big, sir,' said Gregory, holding up a short oar by way of suggesting dimensions.

I was interested, for I had read, in a book by one Hugo, how a man had once entered a sea-cave, and had had a fearful struggle with the creature. Respecting the truth of this, however, there is reasonable doubt, although I know of the capture of an octopus of the seas about Vancouver Island, which actually measured several oars' lengths across its outspread arms. But all this is not telling the story of Gregory's search.

The scuttle eluded us for many days, artfully removing choice foods from the snares we set for him; but we sometimes caught faint glimpses of him down under the overhanging borders of coral reefs, where he sat in shadowy caverns, thrusting forth his horrifying arms to seize the unwary sea-people.

While Gregory with great caution moved the boat close by the rocks, I peered constantly through the water-glass into the grayish depths where the fierce-jawed moray has his hunting-grounds, and where the sharp-stinging medusa drifts along, moving out of the way of no creature whatsoever. It was an enchanted world that lay beneath us, and I saw many strange things which cannot be described here.

But I must explain about the water-glass, an article with which all fishermen of the Bermudas are familiar. Like many another indispensable thing, it is of simple construction, being nothing more than a wooden bucket with a bottom of glass. By placing it on the surface of the water and inserting one's face in the open top, it is possible to see distinctly whatever may be beneath.

We worked our way at times into small bays where green sea-lettuce lay in the shallow water in masses. These we overturned with our oar and boat-hook, hoping to come upon the wily object of our pursuit.

The lair of the scuttle, according to Gregory, may be discovered by certain unmistakable signs. It is the accus-

tomed way of the creature to drag his prey to his hiding-place, there to devour it at leisure. Crafty in the capture of his victims, and wily in the concealment of himself from observation, he makes no attempt to hide the débris of his feasts. He thrusts his garbage forth from his stronghold, unconcerned as to where it fall, provided the entrance be clear for his own movements. If he has feasted high on lobster or oyster, crab or clam, a mountain of shells proclaims his lair. The heap may grow until it would fill a basket as large as a man could lift.

Knowing his weakness for these dainties, Gregory gathered a supply, hoping to lure the scuttle into his power. He did, in fact, nearly succeed on one occasion by lowering a tempting morsel near where the creature lay concealed. A long arm snatched and held the bait until the sharp, hidden hook tore loose, and Gregory almost fell over as he jerked the stout line.

This method might have succeeded if I had not been anxious to take my departure from the islands and so urged haste. Whereupon Gregory, who was big and powerful and did not fear a personal encounter with the scuttle, became more aggressive.

On the following day, when the tide was motionless and the water glassy, he saw the scuttle disappear under a narrow ledge a couple of fathoms down in the clear, greenish channel. He was overboard in an instant, and with a few quick strokes reached the bottom. Looking down through the water-glass I could see the whitish soles of his bare feet as he made tremendous upward thrusts with his legs.

The scuttle was disturbed by the suddenness of the attack, and as he had not selected a favorable place for concealment, decided to make off, and lost no time in doing so. He may have caught sight of the whites of Gregory's determined eyes. He was barely quicker, however, than the

quick arm of the man, and might have been seized had he not played a scurvy trick: the water suddenly turned black — black as Gregory's own face.

It appears that the creature always bears a sac of inky fluid ready in an instant to darken the water all about him, and can dart away under an impenetrable cloud of his own conjuring. This characteristic, which I had hitherto read of, I now saw verified. By magic the scuttle had disappeared, and a moment later there was a porpoise-like snort as Gregory's head popped above the surface.

Later, we had proof also of the scuttle's mysterious power of suddenly changing his color. Like the chameleon, he may appear conspicuously dark at one moment and inconspicuously pale at another, against the grayish, ragged wall of the coral reef. This I made sure of as our boat came close to another of his hiding-places. Although he was in full sight, it took me some minutes to realize that the ghostly outlines pointed out to me were not a part of the gray background of jagged rock. He can, moreover, instantly turn brown or become spotted, as I later saw with my own eyes after we had got him into our power.

It was clear that there was nothing more to be done in that locality; so Gregory clambered aboard and we held counsel together as the boat drifted broadside up the channel with the tide; and the earnestness of the black man made so profound an impression on me that when we parted in the evening I was not without hope that my mission would eventually be crowned with success.

But the next day we were again disappointed. Gregory dived and had the scuttle in his arms almost before I could brush from my eyes the salt water his splash threw over me. As he came up alongside, however, trouble began, for the scuttle got a grip on the bottom of the boat with his many sucker-covered arms, and, while Gregory was get-

ting his breath, his hold slipped, and again the creature was off. Just how he managed to disappear so suddenly remains a mystery; neither Gregory, who went under again, nor I, who promptly reached for the water-glass, got the faintest glimpse of him. Doubtless he shot away body foremost, after the manner of his kind, every one of his eight arms contributing to the haste of his departure.

Failing in all these manœuvres, I began to scout among lonely pools under the cliffs, where, if cautious, one may see strange sea-folk when the tide is out. Gregory, left alone with his stratagems, disappeared for a few days. The last glimpse I had of him was of a very black man with a very earnest face, loading a huge wicker contrivance into a boat. I had considerable faith in his resourcefulness, for he knew the reefs and caves as well as did the scuttle himself.

But my solitary patrol of the rocky shore proved fruitless, and I was glad, two days later, to find Gregory sitting on a stone wall down by the little dock, swinging his bare feet and enjoying the hot sunshine, but not much inclined to talk. He told me that he had gone to a distant island village in search of a large trap-device used for catching fish. This, with the help of another fisherman, he had lowered into a deep cleft among the reefs two or three miles to the westward. I was to go with him the next day to see if by any possibility the scuttle had been deluded into entering it, for it was baited with something which the always hungry monster was pretty sure to investigate.

We were off early in the morning, but made slow progress, as there was little wind. It was fully three hours before we arrived at the sunken trap, which Gregory located by the bearings of certain distant cliffs, for there were few portions of the reef showing at high tide. The breeze being light, the stone killick with line attached was thrown over-

board without lowering the sail. Through the water-glass we made out the framework of the big trap on the bottom. I let out more anchor-line, the sloop drifting astern until we were nearly over the trap, when Gregory yelled that the scuttle was ours.

He let down a grapple, and after some heaving and hauling we dragged the cumbersome contrivance on board. The hatch over the water-filled well of the sloop was shoved back to make ready for the entrance of our captive. I kept a firm grip on the trap while Gregory, all the while shouting instructions to me and abuse at the scuttle, undid the fastenings at one corner. It took a deal of punching with an oar to dislodge the creature, whose eight arms were reaching in all directions. When one of them thrust through an opening and took a turn around Gregory's bare arm, the whites of the man's eyes were even more conspicuous than his white teeth. There was a ripping sound as he tore the arm away from that sucker-covered arm of the scuttle, but no harm was done to either combatant.

What with the lurching of the sloop, the rocking of the big unsteady trap, the resistance of our captive, and Gregory's shouting, there was considerable turmoil for so limited an area as that we occupied on our small craft. The scuttle was gradually crowded down, and was presently forced to take refuge in the well to escape the black man's oar. In the bottom of the trap lay the empty shell of the great crayfish which had tempted the creature to his undoing. With the hatch back in place, and the trap lashed against the windward side of the mast, our work was done.

After a pull on the sheet, I took the tiller and my companion rested from his labors; but his tongue was loosened, and by the time we came to anchor in the twilight, he had said more about the scuttle than I have been able to recall, and a good deal that I am not hopeful of being able to

verify. Nevertheless, he had earned his reward, and as the lights were beginning to glimmer around the harbor, he went to his home with a comfortable jingle of coins in his pocket.

When the steamer sailed away to the north, the scuttle was a captive on board, staring with unwinking eyes at the passengers who came to gaze at him. He escaped from confinement twice during the voyage, and we had no small difficulty in getting him properly secured. We learned that a large prisoner, if he is persistent enough, may take flight through a comparatively small hole, and we were therefore unremitting in our watchfulness until the captive was landed securely within the walls of the ancient fortress at the Battery.

And that is how the octopus came to the Aquarium.

IN NOVEMBER

BY EDITH WYATT

They had pitched camp in the shelter of a great buff-colored dune, with two up-turned canoes, and a small tent with a flap staked over it.

Lake Michigan, all green and mist-blown, banded the whole north horizon, to break along the curving beach in little hoary crowns of foam and bubbles. Southwest, southeast, and south, the broad, full contours of the dunes purled far away, beneath the gray and purple sky of the late autumn. They were grown with red-oak and yellow poplar-brush toward the west. Toward the southeast and south their long pure curves, low-swooping like a swallow's flight, ran nude and pale, in shadows exquisitely changing in the rising afternoon.

Beside a smoky fire, between the tent and the lake, a sun-burned young woman with roughly blown hair, in corduroy skirt and a boy's overcoat, dark and shabby, now hid her eyes from the smoke, in the crook of her arm, and now rubbed vaseline on a stiff shoe in her lap.

These occupations so closely engaged her attention that she did not at first observe, across the beach, the approach of a little sandy woman between fifty and sixty, in a short walking-skirt and a felt walking-hat tied down with a veil. Her shoes looked damp. She glanced rather shyly, but with a sort of liking and friendliness, at the tent and the fire.

'Come and dry your shoes,' said the girl hospitably, lifting her eyes. She was a rather pretty blonde girl, with a good-humored, quiet expression.

'Are you folks camping out here?' said the visitor, still

looking with an air of satisfaction and pleasure at the camp. 'You're from Chicago, relatives to Mrs. Horick in South Laketown, ain't you? So I heard. I've sewed some for her. Oh, I just wisht I was you. Few cares enough for camping to do it this time of year. Your folks come here to fish?'

'No,' said the girl quietly. 'One of my cousins was taken sick this fall, and told to live outdoors. So he decided to come out here and camp with his wife and little boy and me. For a while.'

'You have a nice place for it.'

'My cousins have gone to the station on some errands,' said the girl reflectively, polishing her shoe. She could not very well say to her relative's dressmaker, that the camp had feared the visit of Mrs. Horick on that very afternoon.

Mrs. Horick was a pretty, competent, hard-edged young woman, who enjoyed such things in life as tight face-veils, high traps, and docked horses. The adult campers had drawn lots to select her victim for the afternoon. The lot had fallen to Jim Paine. But Jim took so unbridled a pleasure in displeasing Mrs. Horick that it was decided such a fate would be too cruel to her. The lots were drawn again. This time the lot fell to Alice Paine. But Mrs. Horick depressed Alice, sometimes for several hours after her departure. The lots were drawn again. This time the lot fell to Elsie Norris. With whoops, it was determined Elsie must remain. She would not care a fig what Mrs. Horick said or thought, would be entirely amiable with her, and, besides, had no shoes to walk to the station in. One pair was wet. The other was too stiff to put on. After dressing Elsie in the most handsome garments the camp afforded, the others had left her, early in the afternoon, with Shep, Rabbie's collie, wandering around within call, and occasionally barking at imaginary wolves in the brush.

'Perhaps you met my cousins on your way,' said Elsie.

'No. I did n't come from that direction. I came from Gary. It ain't much of a place to live. But I got a real good airy room, with a back-porch of my own, in a carpenter's family there. Miss Brackett's my name. I 'm about the only dressmaker in the place, so 's I get plenty of custom, more 'n all that I can do; and well-paid, too, you can say in a way,' she added with a sigh; 'and in a way, not; because I hate sewing. But then I walk a good deal around here. There 's some fine walks through the oaks and in the dunes; just as fine as any one could wish,' she said with a look of content. 'It makes me just about homesick to see your camp. I was camping myself six years ago.'

'Were you? Here?'

'No,' said Miss Brackett, with a little hesitation. In response to Elsie's invitation, she had seated herself on a log, near the fire. There was evidently something very stirring in their little camp to her. For a moment she even looked as if she were going to cry. 'It was on the plains,' she said finally, with a certain pride. 'A long wagon-trip, a whole year long.'

'How fine!'

'Yes,' said Miss Brackett, looking at the dunes and the surging lake. 'It was, as you might say, a great experience. You hardly would believe me, but before that time, why, I hardly knew there was such a place as outdoors; not till I was forty-six years old; and that 's a fact.'

Elsie glanced up at her inquiringly. She had heard of persons who acquired Spanish at ninety, or who experienced a passionate personal infatuation for the first time at sixty, but never of an adult creature, devoted to an indoor existence, who suddenly felt in middle age a real response to the great inarticulate voices of the earth.

'Up to then, I lived on the West Side, in Chicago, with my married sister. My father left the place to her and to

me. Most of the rest of the property went to my young half-brother Kip. But when Nettie's children were nearly grown, it seemed as though there was n't any room left in the house for me; and yet they needed me, you see, to sew for them, right straight along. I used to sew, sew, sew till midnight and past, often, tucking on the girls' summer dresses, especially that last spring when I was at home; and I began to cough then and get so dreadful tired. That winter Nettie thought each of the girls ought to have their own room. It was no more than right, either. Nettie and me, we each had our own room when we was young girls. So I used to sleep just on two chairs with quilts in the back parlor, and could n't seem to rest very good, and, besides, had to get up and get dressed and the room fixed, real early, so Will could come there and read his morning paper. Well, I used to keep all my things in shoe-boxes, up in the attic, so they'd be out of the way. They used to laugh, and laugh, about those boxes; and one night we was all sitting on the steps, and they were laughing, and my youngest niece, Baby, she got real mad. She 's so warm-hearted and she never wanted to take my room, and only did because it provoked Nettie so, for her not to. Babe turned real white, and she said all of a sudden, "The reason why Aunt Min has n't anything but shoe-boxes to keep her things in is just because we 've turned her out of everything," she said. "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves." And she jumped up and ran into the house.

'That night my brother Kip happened to be there. He'd been West ever since he was fifteen. He's a lot younger than Nettie and me — only twenty-five, then. We thought Kip was an awful wild, queer sort of fellow, then; we did n't know him at all. I felt just like the rest. He'd run through all that was left him long ago; and he'd married an actress and was separated from her. He was a sort of a Socialist

too, and even had tramped some. But he seemed to be real kind in some ways. When Babe said that, he looked at me quite hard. When he went home he says to me, "You look sick, Min," he says, and he took hold of my hand. "You've got fever. Why don't you see a doctor?"

'Well, I don't know what got into me. After they was all gone that night, I just broke down, and cried and cried. I did feel dreadful sick and feverish, and I had n't no money of my own to see a doctor, and felt just all gone really. I managed to get up and fix the room before any of them come down. But then I had to lie on the sofa, and could n't get to breakfast. And after breakfast — would you believe it? — a doctor come. Kip sent him, himself. But he frightened Nettie to death. I felt dreadfully sorry for her.'

'He told your sister how ill you were,' said Elsie gravely.

'Oh, yes. But it was n't so much that, as she was so afraid some of the children might catch my trouble. She was all right though as soon as they got me to the hospital, though she was provoked too, because it took so much of her time to come there to see me. She come twice before I went away. The doctor said that going away was my only chance. For all that I was up and around, he thought I could n't live a year.'

Neither of them spoke for a moment, looking away at the dunes.

'Then — what do you think — Kip had an intimate friend, quite a rich young man, Will Bronson, who was sick the same way I was. That's how Kip come to notice my sickness so. The doctors wanted him kept out of doors, and he and Kip was going on this wagon-trip. But his mother was nearly crazy worrying over it, and worrying the young man and crying all day and night. She thought Kip never could take care of him. Well, those boys wanted me to go

off with them on the wagon-trip. They said I could cook for them, and it would relieve the mother. And it did. They took me to see her. And she thought if a person like me could go on a wagon-trip it could n't be so awful after all. Well, the short and the long of it was, we went to Fort Leavenworth, and the boys got a wagon and provisions and blankets and thick shoes and things for me, and they got two good mules from the government post, and we started off.'

Miss Brackett sat erect. A look of elation burned in her violet eyes.

Elsie drew a deep breath and laughed.

'Yes. I did n't like the idea at first: all the rough clothes, and our being alone on the plains, and after a while going to be right in the desert — it seemed to me terrible. But it was the only thing there was for me to do. I just kep' my mouth shut tight through all that time. And then, I don't know, more and more, oh, I just come to love it!'

After a moment Elsie said, 'And did you really have any hardships?'

'What do you call hardship? The rainy reason was bad. But I 've been lots wetter longer at a time, through whole winters, when I 'd lend my rubbers to the children. Sometimes it was terrible cold. But then we always had a good fire. I've been lots colder in the back parlor and on crowded street-car platforms, and lots and lots more uncomfortable. Once we got off the trail. Once we had a bad time about finding water. One night, after the mules was hobbled they jumped along so far, even hobbled, that we could n't get them for hours. Kip and Will Bronson was gone six hours in different directions; and I was afraid they was lost. But I've had more hardship, you might say, and not that I want to complain either, in one week on the West Side at home, than in a whole year of what they called roughing it.

And for hard feelings, and real mean bad ways of acting, I've seen more of them over getting out one shirt-waist in a dressmaker's shop, than in that whole time on the wagon-trip. Even though once we had a man in our camp that we heard afterwards was a criminal and fugitive from justice,' she added with a laugh.

'What sort of a man was he?'

'A very considerate, pleasant sort of man. He was a short, thick-set fellow from Missouri, with a hard sort of chin. He come riding up near the Baton Pass, and asked to stay the night and get supper and breakfast with us. Well, it so happened I had caught cold and was n't feeling extra. The boys was worried and sort of mad, — that was the worst trouble we had, — because I would mend and cook just the same. The boys cooked terrible, and it seemed as though I could n't have no peace of mind, unless I did it. It made me feel so as though I was no use to them and not paying my share by what I did, you know. Well, this man from Missouri was a fine cook. He stayed with us three days, and by the time he went I was all right again. He was real helpful. They never got him. When we come to Trinidad, we was good and surprised to find he was a cattle thief that shot a sheriff that tried to arrest him.'

The lake was paler now. White clouds plumed on the horizon, and an evening glow, green and faintly flushing, was reflected delicately from the west. The dunes were browner and darker. The visitor sat thinking, evidently, of her long, free wandering days. Elsie, putting on her shoes, sat thinking of her wayfaring companion's mean and hateful life in the very midst of what is called civilization and respectability; of her struggle for existence — a struggle in which she had been all but killed by the greedinesses around her; a struggle just as sharp as any of the nail-and-claw-depredations commonly attributed exclusively to wilder-

nesses. They watched the sky change, in an unspoken friendliness.

'And now, you are much better?' said Elsie quietly.

'Yes. Now I'm well, thank God! And the Bronson boy as sound as a bell. That was the most lucky illness you can imagine for me. I could n't go back after that to the way I lived before. I always would live different — more outdoors, and just looking after myself better. Since that time, I 've been lots more use to myself and everybody else. After we got to California, I sewed here and there for the people where we boarded first, and they liked my sewing so much, and I made so much money, that when Kip got a job to Gary, engineering for the electric plant, and I come too, to keep house for him, I put up a sign and gradually I'd worked up a good trade, before he was married. Why I'm going to be able to send Babe to Vassar, and plenty for me to take a trip west, too, next summer. Kip married such a nice girl.' She rose. 'I've talked you to death. But when you spoke about your cousin, it brought everything right out of my lips some way. I hope he 's not so very sick.'

'No. He will be well again. He has a splendid constitution.'

Miss Brackett shook hands with her. 'I wish you would come in for a minute and see me, if you ever have time some day when you're in Gary.'

'I will.'

'Good-night.'

'Good-night.'

As her visitor disappeared over the rounded ridge of the dune, Elsie heard the home-coming voices of the campers. They had brought peanut-taffy to her, and they praised her none the less highly for her intended sacrifice to the Moloch of Mrs. Horick and the dullness of the world that she had not needed to make this sacrifice.

For some reason, she could not have explained to them about her chance guest. But she was still thinking of her, as she walked from the shore a little later to gather firewood for supper. The sun dropped long-ribbed level beams over the russet oak-brush and buff shadows of the dunes. Crimson rifts broke in the amber ether of the west. Rich, rich, soft, and deep, the fragrance of some far autumnal bonfire breathed in the cool air.

'Where are the songs of spring? oh, where are they? Mourn not for them, thou hast thy music, too,' rang silently in the girl's fancy as she stood looking around her. And she wondered that she never till that day had realized how deeply wild creation is the birthright of every creature, not only for the power of tooth and fang, the strength of the marauder, but for the vitality of speed and sensitiveness, ground-squirrel, deer, and cricket; and how Nature's most profound magnificence might sing, perhaps, not in her thrilling melody to April pulses, but in her proud cadence to November hearts.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE NOTES

BIOGRAPHICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE NOTES

THE LIE

MARY ANTIN, ever since *The Promised Land* first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, has come to mark the highest standard of literary excellence and political idealism possible for the best and most gifted of our foreigners to attain. Born in Russia, educated in Boston and New York, her influence has been widely exerted by her books and by her public addresses.

One of the chief points of interest in Mary Antin's story lies in the conflict of ideas about truth. David had learned that in America a good patriotic citizen should learn to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The demand for this strictness, he came to learn, was more particularly severe when assertions were recorded in writing on public documents. The little boy understood equally well that the training which his father had received in Russia made it seem right in certain cases to swear falsely and deceive the government. David therefore saw the tragical significance of his father's false record on the American public school document. In David's conception Mr. Rudinsky had done no wrong in telling the lie; yet that lie nevertheless stood out as a bold contrast to George Washington's idea of truth. How could the little boy be loyal to both ideas, when the ideas were diametrically opposed to each other?

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What are some of the differences suggested between life for the Jewish person in Russia and in America?

2. How does the author indicate her own feelings in regard to the problems that confront David and his father?

3. What does citizenship mean to Mr. Rudinsky? What are some of the more concrete forms by which he makes his ideas of freedom evident? Does his conception of Americanism coincide with that of the average American?

4. Has the literalness of David's interpretation of "America" any real connection with the time of the story? Was it necessary to give so much general detail before the question of David's age came up?

5. Why is Bennie introduced into the story? Do you find any other characters contributing to the humor or acting as foils?

6. How does the author reveal Miss Ralston's competence to reconcile the two ideals of truth?

STUDENT'S COMMENT ON 'THE LIE'

To me the chief interest in *The Lie* centres in the portrayal of character. Naturally I was most interested in David, and I found myself contrasting David's habitually serious devotion to his studies with my own rather fitful habits of attack. The contrast was not comforting. Little Bennie I liked, too. Indeed, I think that for everyday living, I should find him the more agreeable companion of the two. He bubbles over so easily and charms us with his frankness and unconscious humor. Mr. Rudinsky's ambition for David is splendid — so splendid that we can pretty readily excuse the lie he told about David's age. I was not so much interested in Mrs. Rudinsky, but I nevertheless felt that if I were grading her on her proficiency in motherhood, I'd have to give her an A —, — or at least a B+. And Miss Ralston was wonderful. Would n't it be splendid if every teacher could have such a sympathetic understanding of children's hearts!

The second item that interested me was the patriotic note. In these war days everything even remotely connected with the patriotic ideal stirs us. I was proud that I could think of America as the land where my fathers had freely died in order that I might live in freedom. And I rather guiltily questioned whether I have been showing by my own service any real appreciation of the sacrifice which these fathers had made. And I felt a bit ashamed when I thought that David's admiration for George Washington somehow seemed loftier and more deeply personal than my own had been.

Another characteristic struck me: Miss Antin portrayed her separate scenes with such graphic power. I am sure that I shall always remember the whimsical figure of David in the George Washington coat that was so much too big for the tiny figure. But I was almost afraid to laugh for fear of hurting David's feelings, for David somehow seemed so very near. This touch of reality is equally strong in the passage which describes Mrs. Rudinsky and her hasty toilet, and her hands on which the scrubbing brush and paring knife had left their unmistakable marks.

I, of course, find that I was interested in the plot. Indeed, I read stories principally for the fun of seeing how the events shape themselves at the close. It does n't matter here that we are not told exactly what happened in that conversation between Miss Ralston and David. We know that the trouble was all smoothed out. Personally, I feel quite sure that David finally took part in that school entertainment.

BLUE REEFERS

ELIZABETH ASHE is the pen name of Georgiana Pentlarge, a young and promising story-writer, living in Boston.

A reefer properly belongs in the category useful. Even in its second or third season of usefulness, it retains certain warm and comforting qualities. How its sphere of endeavor may be extended to include a divine mission of poetic justice, Miss Ashe unfolds in a delightfully humorous experience of two little girls — one very pretty and habitually urbane, the other very homely and rather crude. With reefers smothering all glories of Persian lawn and fine silk slips, we have two little girls arrived at the height of ecstatic self-forgetfulness in the excitement of giving a recitation for the Christmas entertainment.

Complete satisfaction, too, is the reader's. What a delightful chuckle he gives over Aunt Emma's chagrin at discovering that, in the matter of little girls, golden hair and pink cheeks, or freckles and a 'jaw,' make very little difference! Yet his chuckle, after all, is only an echo from an adult world, a world suggested to Martha by the vague whisperings of Father and Mother after she has gone to bed. Far more real is the world Miss Ashe has created, where Miss Miriam's black dress and gold cross present a charming but insoluble mystery; where one is forced, however regretfully, to reconcile cotton-batting with a Sunday-School Christmas tree, and where 'it is so nice to be in things.'

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Comment on the author's use of detail. Does it create a real atmosphere?
2. Is the author successful in her interpretation of the mind of the small girl? Is the author's own personality ever intruded? How is she able to secure the larger view of the events that take place?
3. Is the climax made more or less effective by the children's unconsciousness of their act? Would you have preferred a more startling dénouement?
4. Why is Luella sketched so lightly? Is the contrast only between the two little girls?
5. How does Miss Miriam contribute to the interest in the story?
6. Comment on the skillful ending of the story.

THE DEBT

KATHLEEN CARMAN (Mrs. L. N. Dodge), a writer of interesting short stories, lives in Evanston, Illinois. *The Debt* is her first contribution to *The Atlantic*.

Certain of the old Flemish painters present a canvas which seems to suggest that a peaceful meadow-land, a winding river, or a distant mountain-slope, exists only as a background for the figure in which they are interested. The relative importance is indicated by the proportions that make the figure loom large and masterful within the scene. Miss Carman, too, has cleared her canvas for the presentation of her figure; but her heroine is very small, very insignificant, in the presence of greater realities of expansive sea, cloud-fancies, or the rising moon. The interest of the story centres in the relation between Nature — more exactly God in Nature — and patient, plodding Sister Anne.

Nothing else matters. The problem itself is clear to Sister Anne; only the solution is difficult. To one whose life has seen all the unloveliness of heavy manual labor, there exists a pressing necessity to pay for the joy of living that is in her: a strange, absorbing joy in the beauty that God has created. Praise and prayer are not her instruments. A loving attendance at chapel and early matins cannot translate her feelings. Love and worship must be transmuted into the thing she knows — service.

The time comes. Simply, consciously, unquestioning, she risks her life to return another's to God — a small payment for what He has given her. The problem is between them. Her devout companions may admire, the wealthy landowner wonder; nothing can be given to this 'poor, lonely, ignorant, toil-worn being, who in her starved existence had found more joy than she could make return for.'

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. The reader will find it interesting to contrast the ways in which Sister Anne and The Princess, in Miss Donnell's story of *The Princess of Make-Believe,* reconcile themselves to the drudgery of dish-washing and similar tasks of kitchen routine.

2. What various manifestations of nature especially impressed Sister Anne? What appeal did these make to her companions?

3. Do you regard the author's prolonged analytical method of characterization — as employed in the first part of the story — as the most

effective means of bringing the reader into an understanding of the deeper personality of Sister Anne?

4. What special detail in this analysis most strongly impresses you?

5. What other method might have been adopted?

6. Characterize fully the spirit and the motive which impel Sister Anne's final deed of sacrifice. What impresses you as the finest element in her act?

7. Comment upon the author's way of ending the story.

SETH MILES AND THE SACRED FIRE

Cornelia A. P. Comer, accomplished critic, essayist, and writer of short stories, was educated at Vassar, and afterwards engaged in journalistic work in the Middle West and California. She now lives in Seattle.

There are really three stories in one: Cynthia's and Dick's we put together from suggestions; that of Seth Miles we know from his own detailed narrative; Richard's remains for our forming. All the details are woven into a tale of one day. A day hot and sultry in itself is made to coincide with the grumblings and self-pitying of a pampered son; both day and character are cleared without the arrival of the threatened storm, and duty is made as splendid and beautiful as the sun emerging from a darkened sky. A dilettante, conceiving in his cultured self an appropriate offering from Mammon to the Muses, learns that even the heir of millions has work to do. The place and the teacher emphasize the greatness of the lesson. There is little doubt in the reader's mind that Seth Miles's sacrifice has been worth while. To him comes a double reward: the realization that Cynthia and Dick have lived lives worth his self-denial, and the satisfaction that to their son, through his own wise teachings, has come the ability to 'sense things.'

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Comment upon the advantages secured by opening the story with direct quotations.

2. What light do these quotations throw upon the character of Richard's father?

3. Note how quickly the transfer is made from the office of Mr. Bonniwell, Senior, to Seth Miles's farm house. Such compression is necessary in a short story.

4. How do you explain Richard's first attitude toward his teaching and toward all his surroundings at Garibaldi?

5. What was the first surprise Richard received concerning the character of Seth Miles?

6. What, according to Mr. Miles, was the marked change which the young teacher, 'Earnin' money to get through college,' effected?

7. Was Seth Miles's sacrifice — the sacrifice he made when he gave up Cynthia — a natural one under the circumstances? Why? What helped to console him for his loss?

8. What was the second sacrifice, and in what spirit was it met?

9. Contrast Seth Miles's spirit with the spirit of Sister Anne in Miss Carman's *The Debt*.

BURIED TREASURE

Miss Mazo De La Roche has attained her most notable literary success in *Buried Treasure*. So apparent is this success, that a moving-picture company has recently asked the privilege of producing this story.

One suspects that Mrs. Mortimer Pegg never was a little girl; one is surprised to learn that Mr. Mortimer Pegg was, in a mysterious long ago, 'just so high'; that Mrs. Handsomebody issued from some unnamable monstrosity a full-fledged, much-starched governess, is beyond doubt. If not, how could they fail to enter with zest into the midnight treasure-hunt? What a wonderful scene it is: a burly old pirate in leather jerkin, breeches, and top-boots, not to mention a gleaming cutlass, surrounded by an Angel, a Seraph, and 'just John,' with as bloodthirsty appointments, all intent on the treasure-trove mysteriously located in Mrs. Handsomebody's back yard. And then come the Grown-Ups! Poor Mr. Pegg must return to the disguise of an archæologist and the realms of respectable age.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Divide the story into scenes for a motion-picture production. What would be the most regrettable loss in such a representation?

2. What do the names of the characters contribute to the charm of the story? Are they any help to your interpretation of the characters?

3. Comment on the characterization of Mary Ellen. Is she a type? Are there any other characters that you recognize as types? Do the presence of these detract from the real interest of the story?

4. Discuss the author's power of word-selection and striking comparisons. What does this power add to her style?

THE PRINCESS OF MAKE-BELIEVE

ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL was born in Maine, where much of her life has been spent. She has, however, lived in the Middle West, and her present home is in Framingham, Massachusetts. She has been a frequent contributor to many of our best periodicals.

It is the charm of perfect understanding that lifts Annie Hamilton Donnell's story, out of the many, into that enchanting region inhabited by such bewildering creatures as Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm and Anne of the famed Green Gables. To the author must be attributed that same responsive gift that makes the Prince really a Prince. For the Princess there is no evil to her who will not see it; so there is no harsh stepmother or horrid witch — only a Queen who 'never enjoys herself on wash-days.' The author's delightful touches of humor make an easy and comfortable medium from Make-Believe to a no less interesting world of Little Willow Twins and fishing pools.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What is the most marked characteristic of the Princess?
2. What foils are introduced to bring this characteristic into bolder view?
3. In what particular items is the author's sense of humor best displayed?
4. Where is the emotion of the Princess most intense?
5. Is this emotion suddenly or gradually destroyed?
6. What are the points of strongest contrast between the imagined Prince and the real little neighbor-boy?
7. Comment on the sudden ending of the story.

THE TWO APPLES

JAMES EDMUND DUNNING, journalist and publicist, is the author of many reviews, government reports, essays, and short stories. He has had a long and honorable connection with the Department of State at Washington.

What has happened before the sixteenth day, what ship it was, what its destination, who its crew, how they had been wrecked, we are not told; nor are we particularly concerned with the history of those preceding events. We are intent on one man living with half-mad intensity a whole life in a single day. It is not so

much that he knows the pain of diminishing vitality, the scorchings of hunger and thirst, as it is the spiritual tortures he undergoes. Everything that treacherous Desire can mean, he feels. It is only an apple, but as he, in his hungered, famished state, gazes upon it, every sense is alive with an intense elemental desire. At the moment of severest trial, with the clearness of vision of those near death, he sees himself, knows his sin, feels the mercy of God. And as the day closes, he experiences the happiness of sacrifice. Beside him Zadoc sleeps, perhaps drifts off into the Unknown.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. If the author had wished to make a much longer story of this, what episode or episodes could he have greatly elaborated? Can you surmise why he did not do this, but preferred rather to develop the situation he had selected?
2. What artistic effect is created by the description of the Cape Cod farm? Analyze the sensory imagery.
3. Why does Zadoc command that the last apple be placed 'under the tin cup in the middle of the raft'?
4. What had previously been Jeems's attitude toward the sea? Has his attitude now changed? Why, or why not?
5. From the standpoint of mere sense-impression, what is the most significant moment in the story?
6. What is the point of highest spiritual interest?

THE PURPLE STAR

Mrs. Rebecca Hooper Eastman, a magazine writer of distinction, lives in Brooklyn, New York. Her father, the late Dr. Hooper, was for many years president of the Brooklyn Institute.

The judgment of his peers proved fatal to the glory of Charley Starr. Miss Prawl, the sixth-grade teacher, learned, too, with surprise, that if one is a dutiful child who neither disobeys nor deceives, he thereby lessens his opportunity to achieve the heroic. The literalness of Theodora and her zealots destroys any romantic impulse to make reckless synonymous with brave. One is reminded that the youthful escapades which brighten the biographies of certain national heroes — always making notable exception of the Father of Our Country — would not have met the rigorous demands of Theodora's approval. The conclusion is obvious: it is difficult to become a hero and at the same time re-

tain all the virtues — particularly the much-desired charity. And who would be judge? Let the order of the Purple Star be abolished!

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What is the author's purpose in writing this story?
2. What are the chief points of interest, besides this well-defined purpose?
3. Are you satisfied with the outcome of the story? Could you suggest any other way of meeting the problem?
4. Do you find the characters real? Is Theodora typical?
5. Why is it necessary to make character and setting somewhat subordinate?
6. Do you like the introduction? What is the basis of its charm?
7. Do you find the author critical of other things outside the immediate purpose of the story?

RUGGS — R. O. T. C.

WILLIAM A. GANOE, now stationed at West Point, is a captain in the Regular Army. When *Ruggs — R. O. T. C.* was printed in the *Atlantic*, it was immediately tried out in the class-room, where it won the instant favor of high-school pupils. It was the first story to be issued in the series of *Atlantic Readings*.

Amusing situations, with lively dialogue a-plenty, in this training-camp story of Mr. Ganoe, are the conveyances for a splendid lesson in pluck. Ruggs, the successful bank-manager, knew that only the best in the individual is worthy of recognition when it comes to government service. He meant to give that best. The trial came. Despite the confusion and the jeers, Ruggs came through; brains and thorough-going effort counted. To Ruggs it meant a first lieutenancy for his pluck, something to tell Alice, and a ride in a blanket for the glorious 'sell' he had practised on his jeering comrades. Underneath the fun and the hazing, there is, on all sides, sincere appreciation of merit.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What purpose does the opening dream serve, besides that of arousing immediate interest?
2. Besides his ability for quick decision, what is the outstanding feature of Ruggs's character?
3. How is the character of the Meter drawn? Is there any advantage in not naming him?

4. Are you prepared for the Meter's decision in regard to the Duke? Is the latter introduced into the story for any purpose other than to amuse?

5. What are the author's chief means of keeping suspense?

6. What ends do Squirmy's nightly exercises serve?

7. Would it have added to the interest of the study to have Alice more fully characterized? Why is she introduced?

THE WAY OF LIFE

LUCY HUFFAKER is a short-story writer of distinction, who has recently been devoting her principal interest to the drama. She is connected with the Washington Square players in New York City.

In the short space of a May evening, Emmeline Black, mother of eight children, a good wife for a farmer, careful and industrious, lives through her girlhood aspirations and the complete shattering of her dreams. Finally, there comes to her the greater tragedy of the realization that, in spite of what she can do, her daughter faces the same career of fantasy and disillusionment. For the first time in twenty-one years, Jake Black finds his wife different, almost a bit untractable. Yet he can find no solution for the problem. 'Em' has been a good wife, their marriage has been successful, his daughter's possible engagement augurs well for the future; but 'Em' is worried about something. It is the daughter herself who sets their small world aright. Her gratitude for the dreams her mother has given her brings to Emmeline the realization of the value of inspiration where accomplishment proves impossible. The years of hard work before her, and the prospect of a similar life for her daughter, grow insignificant before the new consciousness that dreams do last.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Comment on the general atmosphere produced by the opening paragraphs.

2. What descriptive details contribute particularly to the realism of the scene?

3. How is this realism more fully brought out in the conversation between the wife and husband?

4. What feelings prompted the lie which Mrs. Black told? What can be said in extenuation of this lapse?

5. What contrasts were prominent in her mind?
6. What in Victoria's character, makes the strongest appeal?
7. Do we feel that Victoria is more likely than her mother to keep the youthful dreams and visions?
8. What is Mrs. Black's greatest consolation?
9. Comment on the author's way of ending her story.

A YEAR IN A COAL MINE

JOSEPH HUSBAND has, since his graduation from Harvard in 1907, been engaged in industrial pursuits. He has, however, found time to contribute frequently to *The Atlantic Monthly*. At present Mr. Husband is an ensign in the United States Navy. The first account of his naval experience is published in the May (1918) *Atlantic*.

For vividness of sense-suggestion — color, sound, smell, feeling — Joseph Husband's smooth-flowing narration of a year's experience in a soft-coal mine is worthy of study. The blackness which is 'absence of light rather than darkness,' the submerging silence, the seeping gas-vapors, the nervous consciousness of lurking danger — all these give indisputable atmosphere. What grim tragedy, awful in its heavy brutality, might not here be grimly enacted! Instead, there is work — the grimy, sweating work of the underground; hard muscles, and senses not too alive to material forces. An occasional superstition gives life to the blackness — a strange white phantom that dazzles the sight and blinds the understanding with unreasoning fear. But most vivid of all is the blackness and the work.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. How does the author's preface add to the interest in his narrative? Are your expectations of his added power borne out?
2. Do you find Mr. Husband more able in his descriptions of large scenes, masses of buildings, groups of people, — or in the individualizing of the single person or thing?
3. Is the setting for the work, or the work itself, the chief purpose of the narrative? Which do you find the more interesting?
4. Can you explain the author's feelings of mortification as he first enters upon his duties?
5. What are some of the elements that make for the vividness of the scenes?

6. Why is the occasional mention of color so effective?
7. Contrast the mental occupations during a period of temporary leisure in a coal mine with a similar rest hour in the upper world?
8. From reading this narrative, can you offer any reasons why the ancient peoples believed mines to be inhabited by a race of gnomes?

WOMAN'S SPHERE

S. H. KEMPER's short stories reveal a genuinely sympathetic understanding of child-life. Mr. Kemper's present home is in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

The plot itself is slight: the presentation of a ball — a *worsted ball* — as a birthday present to a boy of nine! The comic element immediately suggests itself; Wilbur discovers that it may come very near tragedy — not for him, but for Aunt Susan. To be so inconceivably old that one cannot understand what a ball of gay worsted would mean to a boy who had already practised imaginary curves with a magnificent white sphere bearing the proud blue label of the American League! All Wilbur's chivalric nature is called out to keep his great aunt from knowing how great is her misunderstanding, and how keen his aching pity that age could be so terrible.

Is there, perhaps, a suggestion here of refined propaganda? — Education for women — higher, broader, what you will?

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Contrast Aunt Susan with Wilbur's grandmother.
2. Mention certain significant items that contribute to the realism of the various situations.
3. Comment on the way in which Wilbur's fancy works, as he views the ball in anticipation.
4. What was there in Aunt Susan's conversation that reveals her lack of understanding of boy nature?
5. Is there any element of surprise in the way Wilbur takes his disappointment? Comment fully upon his varied emotions.
6. What is the marked contrast between Aunt Susan and Wilbur's father?
7. Which paragraph is most interesting from the point of view of setting? Why?
8. Comment on the aptness of the title.

BABANCHIK

CHRISTINA KRYSTO lived the first nine years of her life, from 1887 to 1896, in Russia. She then came with her father's family to America, settling on a ranch. Her vocation is ranch-work; her avocation is writing. Miss Krysto's *The Mother of Stasya* is published in the June (1918) *Atlantic.*

An Armenian, a Revolutionist, a voluntary exile, desiring in his old age nothing so much as the privilege of serving Russia, whose government, institutions, and rulers he had fought all his seventy years — such is Babanchik. Russia had driven his twenty-year-old daughter into an exile of hard labor, had imprisoned his son for the best ten years of his life; and Babanchik died because his strength was too weak to carry him back to serve her. Shall you call it patriotism in a man who cursed his native land with a hymn of everlasting hate? racial instinct in one whose Armenian birth made him an object of official suspicion? Here there could be no overpowering conviction that his country's civilization must be protected against the dreaded Kultur. Yet the desire comes — not only his own, but the command of his imprisoned son, that he serve Russia.

There are other beautiful things in Christina Krysto's story, not the least of which are the suggestive bits of description of the life in the Georgian village. Yet Babanchik, of the caressing name, product of that strange country whose people grow more incomprehensible as the Great War progresses, interesting as he is, directing the summer play in the Caucasian Mountains, is a thousand times more wonderful when swayed by the unnamed power that returns him dead to Russia.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What are the characteristics in Babanchik that make him a favorite with the children?
2. Contrast the Babanchik who played with the children with the Babanchik who talked with the father.
3. What were Babanchik's most serious interests?
4. What circumstances of his birth hampered his influence with the Russian government?
5. How was his ambition to become a member of the city Duma crushed?
6. In spite of government intervention, what were some of the beneficial influences which Babanchik found that he could exert?

7. What was there in the government of Russia that was particularly distasteful to a man of Babanchik's nature?

8. What strong traits of Babanchik are brought out in that long furious fight for his children in the Russian prison?

9. What effect did the war have upon Babanchik's view of Russia?

10. What hastened the old man's desire to return?

11. Comment upon the author's artistic close.

ROSITA

Ellen Mackubin was, several years ago, a frequent contributor to the *Atlantic*. Nearly all her stories are tinged with the military spirit with which she was thoroughly familiar.

The cause of the deed is never revealed to the garrison; its consequences can only be surmised. Indeed the true standing of the affair as tragedy is only guessed. The instigator of the quarrel between Major Prior and Jerry Breton, the perpetrator, and the victim of the tragedy unite in the person of one christianized just enough to suffer for the savage instincts she had never learned to control. We see her just once, Rosita, the beautiful, the impulsive, the passionate; the next time she is dead. It is the feeling of repressed power that makes Ellen Mackubin's story grip the attention. In a few short pages, three — possibly four — characters are made to live, and a tragedy wrecks two lives.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Discuss which of the common elements of story — setting, plot, character, theme, or style — is here most prominent.

2. Discuss the way in which the separate characters are introduced and the complication arranged.

3. How can Jerry's treatment of the commanding officer on the day of the dress parade be condoned?

4. How does the reader feel regarding Rosita's vague declaration that she will rid Jerry of Prior's unfairness?

5. On the night of the shooting, what motive prompted Jerry to fling the pistol far over the edge of the bluff?

6. Describe the effects which the tragedy produced upon the garrison.

7. What were Jerry's feelings during the days immediately succeeding the tragedy?

8. How does the reader decide the question as to who is the really guilty person?

PERJURED

EDITH RONALD MIRRIELEES is a member of the English Department of Leland Stanford Junior University.

It was a useless lie. Robbins knew that, as soon as he had spoken it. But it stopped the boys' teasing. Once spoken, events followed in too rapid succession for him to do more than qualify his statement; the bald accusation remained. Repetition had done more than confirm the story in Sutro; it had benumbed Robbins's own sense of exactness. His reputation for truth constantly confronted him; sometimes it made it easier for him, but increasingly often he saw the difficulty of reconciling the lie with himself. On the other hand, time and self-torture strengthened the conviction that truth must prevail and that no innocent man could suffer by the law. And so it proved. Robbins, the boy who had tried to save himself from momentary discomfiture, who had deliberately placed a man in direct accusation for murder, found himself, not a self-righteous person who by a last act of grace redeems the innocent and places himself on a martyr's pedestal; instead, he found himself a perjured youth, no better than the truck-gardener Emerson in whom truth itself lost credence.

That a malignant fate had placed the name of the guilty man in the boy's mouth, comes with no shock; the author has so carefully prepared our minds for that very verdict, that we are merely surprised that we could have forgotten the bits of telling evidence. The interest begins and ends with a boy of sixteen who in weakness was forsworn.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Comment on the appropriateness of the direct opening. Is such a method more appropriate to one type of story than another?
2. Describe the steps by which the author prepares for, without explaining, his climax.
3. How does the author focus attention, not on the murderer and criminal, but on the individual problem of Robbins? Would you have preferred a more detailed explanation of the cause of the crime?
4. Why is Emerson introduced?
5. Is the enormity of the injury he is doing ever clear to Robbins?
6. What other stories are included, but left untold, in this one?
7. What, to you, is the most significant thing in the author's handling of the narrative? Why would such a story not lend itself to scenic production?

WHAT MR. GREY SAID

MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE, living among the West Virginia mountains, has written many successful stories of the Hill people whom she knows so well.

To make of the little blind child of the coal-miner a compellingly human little soul, yet to touch him with a warmth and beauty of imagination so exquisite that it pains the heart; to do all this so deftly, so tenderly that one draws a quick breath of wonder — these are only bare suggestions of the power that created Margaret Prescott Montague's *What Mr. Grey Said.*

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Contrast the richness of sense-perceptions of Stanislaus with his poverty of all things else.
2. Analyze the elements that make up the charm of Stanislaus. Aside from the pathetic, what is the strongest interest?
3. How does Miss Julia help to prolong the suspense?
4. Would the story have been as powerful if it were entirely tragic?
5. Would the story have gained if Stanislaus were presented in direct contrast to the other blind children? Why would a longer story have been weaker?
6. Does the dialect contribute to the charm of the story? What is the real function of dialect?
7. Does the ending seem a makeshift to avoid a difficulty? How has the author succeeded in making the ending not only possible but probable?

A SOLDIER OF THE LEGION

E. MORLAE was an American who, in the early days of the Great War, enlisted in the French Army and became a Soldier of the Legion. Many of his war experiences are graphically told in his various articles in *The Atlantic Monthly.*

'We spent our time eating and sleeping, mildly distracted by an intermittent bombardment': these were the breathing spells; active work found analogy only in the regions below. Yet either adventure was told with equal calm. That is what impresses one in Sergeant Morlae's narrative. It is so grimly calm, almost impersonal. There is no careless enthusiasm, excited hilarity, or mad vengeance — simply a job to be done. The enemy alive present a target; dead, a source of added comfort for one's self, a souvenir for one's brother, or, if need be, material for a parapet. One's life before and after has nothing to do with the present. And this is even more terrible for what it leaves unsaid.

There is, however, no lack of vividness in *A Soldier of the Legion.* The matter-of-factness of the telling deceives us only for a time, until the intrusion of a crisp, 'Hell kissed us welcome'; or, more significant still, 'And we were counted: eight hundred and fifty-two in the entire regiment, out of three thousand two hundred who entered the attack on the 25th of September.'

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Does the conversational tone of the narrative make it any the less vivid?
2. When is the author's power of vivid portrayal most apparent?
3. What ideas do you get of the Legion's views of the enemy? Contrast it with other war stories you have read. Could it be accounted for by the type of men who entered the Foreign Legion?
4. What in the author's account suggests the general morale of the troops?
5. What does the grimness of the occasional bits of humor convey as to the mental state of the men? What do these occasional jokes gain by their very scarcity?
6. What new ideas of war come to you from Sergeant Morlae's account?

THE BOULEVARD OF ROGUES

MEREDITH NICHOLSON has won most of his popularity as a novelist. He is, however, an accomplished essayist, a poet of distinction, and a keen critic of current literary and political matters. More recently, he has become interested in the writing of short stories. His home is in Indianapolis, where he was privileged to enjoy for many years an intimate friendship with James Whitcomb Riley, whose character Mr. Nicholson has sympathetically portrayed in his novel, *The Poet*, and in an illuminating essay in *The Atlantic Monthly* for October, 1916.

Propaganda in such disguise needs no apology. Not only can we appreciate the cleverness of the trick as well as the earnestness of its author, but we relish what a very good thing a similar lesson would be for our own or for our neighboring cities.

At the same time, there is a worth-while character-study to be made of the Chairman of the Committee on Art, who presents a type almost as rare in fiction as it is in life.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. The student will find it interesting to make a thorough study of Barton's character — his cynicism, his practical good sense, and all his

other prominent traits. A composition discussing all these could be made very interesting and enlightening.

2. Discuss the general political attitude of the average city councilman.

3. In an examination of the plot, what incident seems to you to mark the point of highest interest? Discuss fully.

4. How is Barton's character relieved from any final censure for the spending of money for a statue of a rogue?

WHAT HAPPENED TO ALANNA

Kathleen Norris, a Californian by birth, has been a voluminous writer of magazine fiction since 1910, when she contributed two stories to the *Atlantic* — *What Happened to Alanna* and *The Tide Marsh.*

To those who know Kathleen Norris's *Mother*, nothing more need be said of this author's ability to depict the wholesome sentiment of family life, without the sentimentality that clings to many of the ordinary short stories and novels. The less fortunate may make valuable acquaintance in the halls of Costello. F. X., Senior, 'undertaker by profession and mayor by an immense majority,' shares his position of importance by reason of the charms of his numerous offspring. Mrs. Costello is, of course, the centre of interest, as she is of the Costello circle, which means all who come within range of her generous hand and kindly word. Yet no one remains unindividualized. A few vivid strokes, and the picture is complete. If an artistic hand adds another touch now and then, we are never made conscious of technique. Especially is this true in the case of young Mrs. Church. And what more delightful could there be than the family conversations, which are quite as revealing in points of character as they are delightful in their flashes of humor?

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What purpose does the detailed description of family life serve? Comment on the choice of detail.

2. Besides the plot, what are the most interesting elements in the story?

3. Could you suggest another climax?

4. What is gained by having Alanna solve her problem alone? How does the author arrange that the solution shall be thus accomplished?

5. Is Mrs. Church introduced for any reason other than her slight connection with the plot?

6. Is Mr. Costello as well portrayed as his wife? Can you suggest any reasons why he typifies the Irish-American rather than the native Irishman of the same rank?

7. How does Miss Norris achieve the atmosphere that she does?
8. Could the story be criticized as being sentimental?

SPENDTHRIFTS

Laura Spencer Portor (Mrs. Francis Pope) has long been engaged in literary work. Her essays and stories 'give proof of a versatility of experience as Protean as her talents.' Mrs. Pope is now connected with the editorial staff of one of the prominent New York magazines.

Perhaps that which impresses the reader most in *Spendthrifts* is the production of an atmosphere that makes the strange seem real, and the commonplace take on a suggestion of the fanciful. Not half so wonderful is it that the woman of the orange-colored eyes should meet the lover of her youth, now a lay Franciscan, and live again with him the story of their love before a smilingly complacent husband, as that this story should have been unfolded before the eyes of a romantic little girl who went out to see the world in a rambling old coach. The author, like the successful playwright, completely transfers us to another world. The careful preparation of atmosphere is followed by a swift march of events to a climax the more powerful by the necessity of its restraint. The gradual trailing off into the dim romantic atmosphere out of which the story grew, calls for a curtain that may be raised again only on the author's epilogue.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What can you say by way of comment on the somewhat leisurely beginning of this story?
2. What do you like best in the description of the old-fashioned 'bus?
3. Justify the author's early paragraphs on the herds of dumb cattle.
4. Can you analyze the method by which the author makes even her most trivial details of the trip seem vital and interesting?
5. Is it true that most of these details — both narrative and descriptive — assume greater importance because they are seen through a child's vision?
6. What items bring out the disturbed feelings of the Franciscan soon after he enters the 'bus?
7. Trace the details that very gradually portray the character of Louise's husband.
8. What part does the description of the various costumes play in the portrayal of character?
9. As Louise analyzes to the Franciscan the past relations existing

between them, do we find ourselves sympathizing with one or the other, or with neither?

10. What is the intended symbolism of the title, *Spendthrifts?*

11. What is symbolized by the herd of cattle?

CHILDREN WANTED

LUCY PRATT, a frequent contributor to magazines, lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

So slight is the plot in *Children Wanted* that one might on reflection question whether there is a plot. In the actual reading, one becomes too absorbed in the very real situation that Miss Pratt presents to become coldly analytical. The vividness of Master Crosby Tarbell's particular adventure with life is reflected, not only in the letter Mr. Henry Tarbell dispatches to a certain Pony Man, but in the reader's own warm indignation at the carelessness, the cowardice, of compromising grown-ups in general. At the same time, Miss Pratt's masterly use of commonplace detail, fully as much as the poignant bits of character delineation, such as that which ends the story, makes of *Children Wanted* as effective a bit of narrative technique as it is a striking example of the propagandist's art.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. Is the chief interest of the story in the principal character or in the underlying theme?

2. Would the experience have meant as much to any child?

3. Why is the 'lady on the hill road' added to the list of customers?

4. What does Crosby's father add to the story that Crosby's mother could not? Would you have preferred to be told more about Mrs. Tarbell?

5. Do you find any explanations for the climax in the previous characterization of Crosby? How has the detailed description of the barn helped to reveal the lad's sensitiveness?

THE SQUIRE

ELSIE SINGMASTER (Mrs. H. Lewars), a Pennsylvanian by birth and residence, has been writing at more or less irregular intervals ever since her first story was published in *Scribner's Magazine* twelve or thirteen years ago. Her reputation has been largely won by her sympathetic portrayal of the Pennsylvania Dutch character.

How adequately, how finally, a person can be characterized by his own conversations, all the principals in this little Millers-

town drama demonstrate. Weakness, crudeness, selfishness, speak out their own existence. And, to shine by contrast in the midst of all this pettiness, is the figure of a man who makes the title 'Squire' mean what it has meant to certain English townships, and whatever more comes from responsibility assumed without force of precedent or hope of recompense.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What are the elements which produce the atmosphere of crudity that stands for Millerstown? Could any description of the town produce a like effect?
2. Would it have detracted from the story if Stemmel had been more elaborately portrayed?
3. How is the solution of the case prevented from appearing melodramatic?
4. Would the Squire's sacrifice have gained or lost power if Adam and Sula were less irresponsible?
5. How do the Squire's actions correspond to the tradition of his title? How different are they from what might have happened in a like situation in England?
6. Do you think Adam and Sula worthy of the Squire's interest?
7. What stories growing out of this one remain to be told? Which would be the most interesting?

GREGORY AND THE SCUTTLE

Charles Haskins Townsend, an ichthyologist of international reputation, has been a member of many U. S. government commissions. His present address is The Aquarium, New York.

Gregory and the Scuttle, translated into the literal, means 'How the octopus came to the Aquarium.' In the literal version, the account might have been buried easily and unregretfully in the dry-as-dust records of the American Aquarium Society, or some such august receptacle of information; as it is, it becomes the easy, chatty adventure of one who proves himself human as well as scientific. Moreover, it behooves the practical investigator of the educative process to note that, by this sugar-coated method, various capsules of information slip down without violent contraction on the part of him who will be only entertained.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. How is the title of the story indicative of its general tone?

2. Would Gregory's vision of the adventure have been an interesting one? What would it lack that the scientist's has?

3. When, if ever, does the scientist take the place of the story-teller?

4. What is the chief charm of the account? Would a series of such adventures — with all necessary variation — be altogether as delightful?

IN NOVEMBER

Edith Wyatt was born in Wisconsin, and educated at Chicago and Bryn Mawr. She has for years been a frequent contributor to the best of our American magazines. Her present home is in Chicago.

While listening to Miss Brackett's naïve recital of her personal narrative, we somehow never lose consciousness of the interesting environment created in the beginning paragraphs. In most stories where the interest in surroundings is strong, we are chiefly concerned with the setting in which the incidents of the plot take place. In this instance, however, we are chiefly interested in the autumnal atmosphere in which Miss Brackett's ingenuous tale is told. Here is Lake Michigan, all green and mist-blown, banding the whole horizon. There, in the broad southward, lie the full contours of the forest-covered dunes. And over all is the gray and purple sky of the late autumn. In the inner circle of all this is the camp, with Elsie Norris vividly portrayed in the centre. Her isolation is broken by the chance guest, who tells the intimate personal episodes, so charmingly marked by the artless notes of unselfishness. When the guest leaves and the other campers return, and Miss Norris wanders off alone to gather firewood for supper, the brooding influence of the pervading November scene is felt to be even more profound and impressive.

Suggested Points for Study and Comment

1. What are the three or four most graphic touches in the story?

2. What, aside from the setting, is the most impressive element in the story?

3. What comment can you make on Miss Wyatt's feeling for style? What effects does she produce?

4. Comment on the slight but suggestive glimpse of Baby's character. What other personages in the story show their sympathy for Miss Brackett?

5. Was it worth while to say anything about Mrs. Horick? Why is she mentioned? Do the slight details contribute to the interest of the story?

6. Mention three or four items which might have been elaborated into important incidents in the narrative.

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